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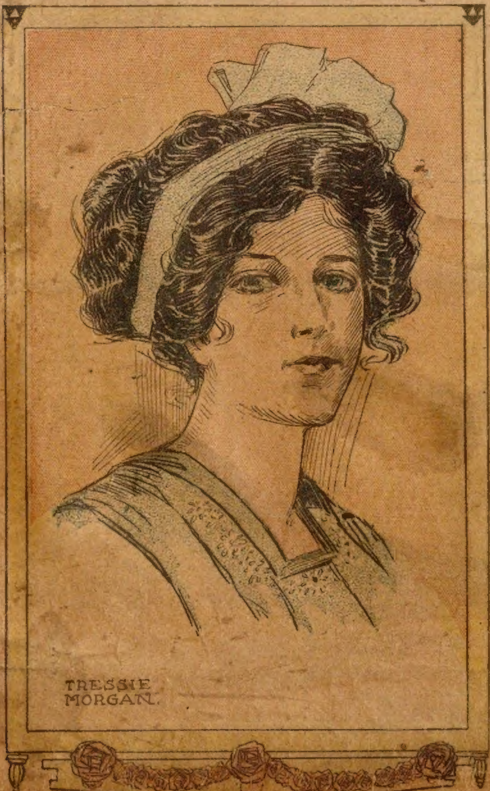
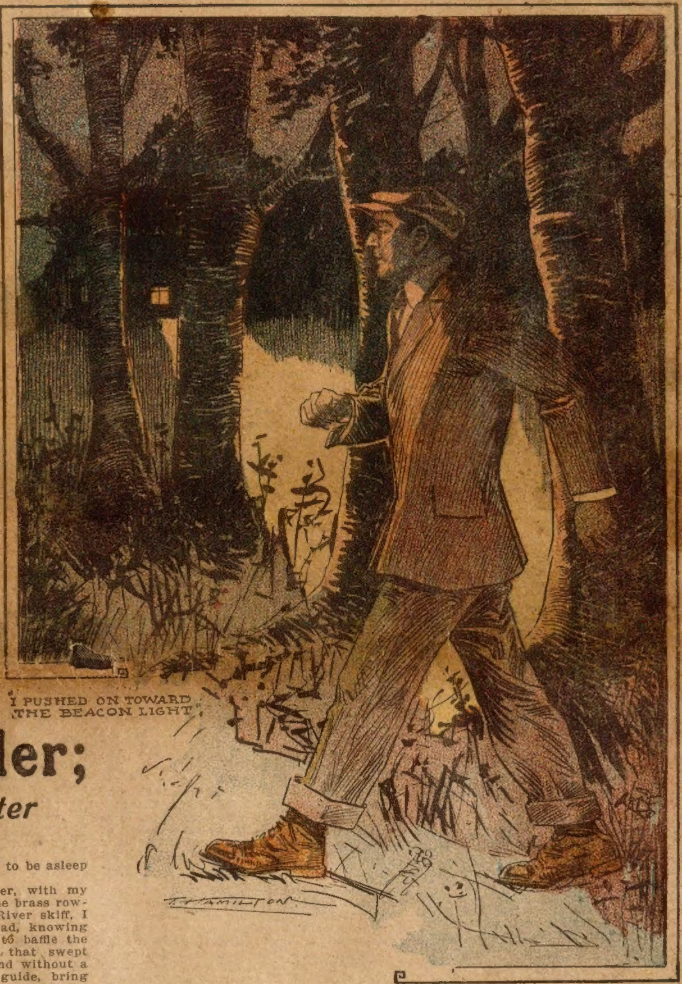

TRESSIE MORGAN.


I PUSHED ON TOWARD THE BEACON LIGHT.

The Sky Smuggler;

Or, The Man-Bird's Daughter

By Stanley F. Matthews

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CHAPTER I.

ANY PORT IN A STORM.

WHEN the storm broke over the great St. Lawrence River that black night it caught me in a little cockleshell of a cedar boat, far out from either shore, and headed toward the Canadian side of the stream.

Perhaps, had I been more of a weather prophet I would have deferred this secret trip of mine across the broad stretch of boundary water until a happier season; but all day the sky had been dark and lowering, so that I had determined the possibilities of an autumn gale breaking upon me during my little voyage to a foreign shore were far fetched.

It is true that old Daddy, the veteran sturgeon fisherman of the lake in the old days, had shaken his wise white head and declared that when the calm was dispelled the storm would probably be a "howler," and that knowing the treacherous nature of the currents that ran between the many islands he would rather be safe ashore at the time than abroad; but being young myself and inclined to recklessness, I scorned to be influenced by this rocking-chair prophecy, and willingly took the chances.

As to why I should wait until night to make this trip that could be so much more easily accomplished while daylight lasted, that was part and parcel with my business—an agent of the United States Government has to accommodate himself to circumstances, and sometimes these are apt to take him abroad when all honest men are supposed to be asleep in their beds.

Once upon the dark water, with my oars working smoothly in the brass rowlocks of the St. Lawrence River skiff, I set myself to the task ahead, knowing that it was no easy thing to baffle the insinuating cross currents that swept around the rocky islands, and without a star above to serve as a guide, bring up safely on the distant shore of the Dominion.

Fortunately I was a fair oarsman, and possessed of at least the average amount of bodily strength given to a man of thirty; so that under ordinary conditions I would have laughed at the perils of the flood that flowed out of Ontario and headed for the far distant sea, carrying on its constantly widening bosom argosies of trade and pleasure.

I had not been ten minutes at work before I realized that the task which confronted me was possessed of possibilities in the line of danger that far outweighed my previous deduction; and that if I hoped to gain my goal I must keep my senses acute and my muscles in good trim for work; the pull of the currents seemed as strong as though the hands of water demons sought to turn my little craft sideways, in order to bring about and upset, and thus I was compelled to keep my wits on the alert against sudden disaster while increasing my lead from the American shore.

To my uneasiness I found that there on the bosom of the mighty river one of those strange autumn fogs had crept out of space, and even the solitary light that was serving as a beacon to my course soon became blotted from sight back of the shifting vapor banks, leaving me utterly without a sense of direction other than the current itself, a treacherous guide at all times, since it often ran at right angles after sweeping around some rocky islet that reared it's head out of the tide.

However, I smiled at the adventure, believing that while my trouble might be increased a bit there could be but one end to it all, and this a safe landing on the coveted soil to the north.

Later on the moon would possibly serve to dissipate the intense gloom to a small extent; but if the clouds held sway this could not be considered any advantage to a lone voyager upon the broad sweep of water.

So I struggled along for half an hour, sometimes knocked out of my reckoning a bit by adverse circumstances, but always endeavoring to keep my right shoulder toward the point whence the current flowed; and so long as this held good I knew I was bound, sooner or later, to accomplish my design.

Then it dawned upon me that a change was rapidly taking place in the conditions surrounding me, and which up to then had seemed bad enough; the fog was giving way before a freshening breeze that began to swoop down from the direction of the Great Lakes, and with a biting touch to its teeth that foretold the story of winter's coming; despite my labor at the oars, I shivered as though a blast from a mighty refrigerator had struck over me, and somehow I could not help casting an apprehensive glance over my right shoulder.

Old Daddy had in his stories of autumn storms upon the lake spoken of this icy breath just preceding the breaking of the gale, and if his reasoning were sound, then I must be fated to experience rough weather during the balance of my trip across.

I imagined that just then I might be in midstream, for I had surveyed the route with a glass more than a few times from a promontory, laying out my plans just as an Arctic navigator might from his charts of the Polar seas—if the storm did swoop down it could hardly have overtaken me in a worse position, for I knew that the rip-raps ahead offered opportunities for strenuous labor in order to overcome their villainous tendencies to bewilder the mariner, and set him off his course.

Perhaps, if it came to the worst, I might seek a landing upon one of the islands dotting the surface of the river; while most of the summer people who occupied these during the season had undoubtedly departed to their city homes, still it was possible for one to find shelter from the blast in the lee of a building, and under stress of circumstances even dare to force an entrance to the cottage boarded up for the winter.

Still, I would not allow myself to even consider that a possibility as yet, for my nerve and muscle were both in excellent condition, and such a word as "fail" remained unknown in my lexicon.

Never had I ever known conditions to change as rapidly as they did that night, so far as the weather went—in ten minutes after first noting the presence of that raw wind it had increased to a howl, and was flinging the water up against the weather side of my frail little craft with savage vehemence; indeed, an additional effort was needed on my part to buffet this new factor in the situation, and which gave promise of upsetting my plans, even if it did not treat my bark in the same cruel way.

There was no thunder or lightning, such as would accompany a disturbance of the elements during the hot weather; but the sullen note in that constantly increasing growl all around told me that, tired of being held in check the equinoctial was rushing down-grade toward the sea with suddenly aroused fury—and in that frail boat I was directly in its path.

Of course it became necessary for me to keep the nose of my craft pointed upstream at an angle of almost forty-five degrees, in order to make progress at all, and at the best I was only crawling along like a snail; even after taking all these necessary precautions the constantly increasing waves in striking against the side of my boat sent the spray over me, so that I had the additional discomfort of finding myself getting well soaked in the bargain.

By this time I was beginning to lose a little of that buoyant confidence that had marked the earlier part of my voyage; and doubts even started to creep into my mind, which I scornfully banished, setting my teeth grimly while I loosened up another peg, and pitted my puny strength against the demoniac combination of wind and wave.

Under such distressing circumstances it is only a question of time when even the strongest of human kind has to acknowledge defeat, unless some miracle is wrought in his favor; and I could hardly look for such, out there on the heaving bosom of the mighty St. Lawrence.

So it came about that I began to keep on the alert for signs of a friendly island that might afford me a refuge; hitherto I had only had words of contumely for these outcroppings of the rocky river bed, since they only aggrarated my troubles by causing counter currents to baffle my designs; but in the light of this new dispensation, with the storm whooping things up in a lively manner, such an event as a dot of land in that heaving sea began to assume the proportions of an enviable proposition with me, so quickly do our convictions change when governed by circumstances.

I was becoming a little exhausted too, for just then it happened that I was out of condition, and inclined to be "stale;" since life in the metropolis, where my work for the Chief of the Secret Service had kept me for some months, is not conducive to athletic stunts, and lack of practice certainly hedges any man's abilities.

Another possibility gave me concern, though I had never considered it up to that time—what if one of those long spruce oars upon which I was straining so ardently, snapped off under the effort, and left me at the mercy of the increasing gale—I fancy that one has to be caught in just such a fix as confronted me at that time to realize the extreme gravity of an impending disaster; and I remember distinctly that the very thought gave me a nervous chill.

Where these myriad of rocky islets rear their heads above the flood the lash of the wind-swept waters upon the reefs produces a roar that is akin to that of old Father Ocean himself as he flings his white-maned steeds up against the Maine coast; and surrounded by these hideous noises it can hardly be wondered at that I began to think a safe harbor, no matter where found, would be the finest thing on earth to a fellow of my description.

It was necessary for me to judge things more from a sense of hearing than through the use of my eyes, and in this way I learned that I must be approaching some sort of barrier, for the wind whistled through the branches of trees and there was the constant splashing sound of water being hurled against an impregnable impediment, such as would go to prove the existence of an island close by.

When I dared I twisted my head around and strove to pierce the gloom that held sway in every quarter; but it was like looking into a cistern, for not a single thing rewarded my anxious gaze, though the sounds kept on growing in volume, and I found no reason to change my opinion.

Fighting for the mastery with the combined forces of the enemy I struggled along, gaining a few yards, but only after almost superhuman efforts; and as I once more turned my eager eyes ahead it was to vaguely see what I believed to be the swaying tops of trees bowing before the gale, and outlined against the gray heavens.

This gave me renewed courage to fight on, and under my strokes the boat slowly but surely drew closer to the shore, though I knew I must be losing ground constantly, and that there was danger of my being carried past the lower end of the island.

Finally I was close enough in to get some benefit from the protection afforded by the trees, so that the wind no longer had a free sweep; and despite the suction of the furious current I managed to force my boat against the land, when I hastened to scramble out, holding to the side so that my faithful little craft might not be swept away, leaving me stranded in midstream on an island of which I knew absolutely nothing.

Although almost exhausted there was nothing for me to do put pull the boat out of the water, and up on the shore; which feat I managed to accomplish, although it left me gasping for breath, and glad to drop down in a heap in order to recuperate.

My next sensation was one of extreme cold, and wet to the skin as I found myself there was only one thing to be done, and that seek shelter as speedily as possible; as yet no rain had accompanied the rush of the storm; but it was apt to descend at any moment; and besides, the spray had soaked me thoroughly; I remembered that I had a few matches in a little case supposed to be weather-proof, and if I could find a house on the island there might be a chance to kindle a fire and dry out—perhaps, when morning came I could discover my location, and set about effecting my escape.

Accordingly I stood up and flapped my arms to and fro vigorously for a few minutes until by this means I had induced the blood to flow freely, and imparted an artificial warmth to my benumbed extremities; after which I started to make my way to that part of the island which, from past observation, I knew would be chosen for a cottage, provided my refuge chanced to be one of the inhabited oases in the wilderness of flowing water.

Struggling along over the rocks, and between the trees that grew in profusion, though of no great size, I was presently thrilled to discover what seemed to be a light ahead of me, a glow such as would be apt to come from the window of a building; and filled with renewed hope, and the prospect of a comfortable ending to my little adventure, I pushed on, bent upon appealing to the "Good Samaritan" spirit of the people who still clung to their island home through the fag end of the holiday season.

CHAPTER II.

THE BUNGALOW MAID.

I had even indulged in a wild hope that my progress across the river had been more rapid than up to this time seemed possible; and that this square window was in truth one from which I had looked just three days previous when visiting the Canadian Country Club in company with a friend I had picked up in my character of Chauncey Odell, a gentleman golfer, who had dropped in from the States to see what was goi[illegible] on across the line; but when I dre[illegible] closer I marked certain features in connection with the aperture that told me this could not be the case.

Besides, I now heard the rush of water beyond, telling beyond all possibility of doubt that the river surrounded my new haven of refuge, and that it were folly to indulge in any such hopes.

Well, things might be worse for me than the prospect of a warm fireside, where I could sit and thoroughly dry out; and determined to make the best of a bad bargain, since there was plenty of time to pursue my investigations another day, I pushed on toward the beacon light that afforded me so much solid satisfaction.

Perhaps it was because I had been trained, as a secret agent of the Government that caused me before knocking at the door of the bungalow to step aside in order to glance through the window.

Hardly had I bent my head to discover who occupied the room from whence the light flowed than I received a severe shock, not unpleasant to tell the truth, but bewildering enough to cause me to draw back and ponder.

There was but a single occupant, that is if a large dog that had been lying before the fire may be excepted; and in this person I had recognized a young girl whom I had met on numerous occasions, and under circumstances that bordered on the romantic—but all those events in the past would have to take a back seat now, I believed.

What was Tressie Morgan doing here in this bungalow upon an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence? I had known her as the daughter of a bold soldier of fortune, one Capt. Simeon Morgan, whose life was said to have been crowded with thrilling adventure, since he had always been one of those warhawks ever found where small nations are growling at each other, running cargoes of contraband goods past a blockade, or leading a forlorn hope in the shape of a filibustering party across the border in aid of the revolutionists.

Of recent years this spirit of daring had taken a new turn with the reckless adventurer, for he had conceived a passion for navigating the air; and possessing an aeroplane of his own invention, which he claimed to be far superior to anything as yet known, he had been giving exhibitions at country fairs in northern New York, sometimes even taking a passenger aloft with him; and on several occasions to my knowledge this additional voyager among the clouds had been his pretty daughter Tressie, in whom I had taken more than a passing fancy.

And now to see that same girl sitting beside the fire, alone in this otherwise abandoned bungalow upon that rocky islet in the St. Lawrence was enough to make me pucker up my quivering lips and attempt to whistle.

But I knew that my presence had already become known to the hound, for he had raised his square head as I peered in at the window; and even while I stood there in hesitation there came a hoarse growl from within, and the beast was on his hind legs at the sash, glaring at me.

I was glad the window happened to be closed, for a struggle with that big beast did not exactly appeal to me just then; and besides, I should hardly have liked doing injury to her protector.

At any rate it forced my hand, for after that I could not have withdrawn even though the inclination to do so were strong within my mind, which truth to tell it did not seem to be; so I quickly brought my knuckles to bear upon the door that was close by, and immediately there was a clamor from the four-footed guardian within, which she did her best to calm even as she fearlessly unbarred the means of ingress.

As the light fell upon my face, upon which I was striving to force a look of surprise and pleasure combined, the girl uttered an exclamation, I could not for the life of me decide whether of dismay or delight—no doubt I was somewhat of a sight at the moment, after my battle with the flying spray of the boisterous river, and my hat had long since been carried away on the wings of the wind, so that my hair was to say the least unkempt.

"This is a great surprise to me, Miss Tressie," I managed to exclaim, as I stood there, while she held the door ajar, not so much to keep me out as to prevent the hound from escaping; "I was overtaken on the river by the storm, and just managed to make this island; it was nip and tuck with me, and honestly, I believe that if I had been swept past the point down yonder I might never have survived the blow. May I come in—I hate to intrude, but being somewhat soaked I have an intense desire to get near that blaze. Is this Tige, the same dog I met before—he ought to know me, for we were good friends—eh, Tige, old fellow?"

Something in the tone of my voice, must have told the animal I was an old acquaintance, for he stopped his furious barks and began to whine, while his stubby tail started wagging in a friendly manner that assured me all was well.

The girl too recognized the fact that nothing further in the way of a hostile demonstration need be feared from Tige, for she opened the door wider, and with [illegible]r pretty face suffused in blushes asked [illegible] to enter.

"My father is not at home just now, though I was expecting him when this storm broke so suddenly. Oh! I hope he has not been caught out on the river as you were, Mr. Odell, and stranded on some island, or else been swept downstream by the wind. That was the one thing I feared when he accepted the loan of this cottage, so as to finish his experiments, after the owner, Judge Rhone, went back to Philadelphia. You see it has a splendid place from which to make a start with an aeroplane, and that counted for everything with father," she was saying as she once more closed the door, and shut out the noise of the howling gale.

I busied myself spreading out on one side of that jolly blaze, and in all my experience I could not remember ever appreciating a fire quite so much as just then; but after all the presence of this girl may have had a little to do with that, for she looked prettier than ever, seen in the ruddy glow of that sparkling illumination; and already I was beginning to wonder what sort of a divinity it could be that had brought me to this particular outcropping of rocks, when there were scores of others within a radius of a few miles, any one of which might have offered me just as safe an asylum in my time of need.

"Then the captain has given up the fair business, finally?" I asked, more for the sake of saying something than because I was in the least interested at that particular moment in anything Morgan might do.

"Yes, he grew to dislike the ways of the country crowds that gathered to see him risk his life. To tell the truth it was on my account though, I believe he determined to make a change; and about this time he received an offer from certain members of the Canadian Club on the bank of the St. Lawrence that induced him to come here. There is keen interest among the different members of the club concerning all manner of aeronautics, and they have a dirigible balloon as well as several aeroplanes among them; but so far it happens that only poor success has followed their atempt to fly; and they have employed my father as an instructor. Besides, there is a big wager between two wealthy members, one of them an American, about the chances of a flight over the St. Lawrence this fall, and my father has made up his mind to accomplish the feat, so as to claim the big purse put up. Already he has on two occasions flown from this island to the shore near the club house; and he is only waiting for a calm moonlight night to carry out his plans."

I hung upon her words while she was talking—in the first place the sound of her voice was music to my ears, and resembled the gurgling of waters so dear to the heart of a lover of Nature; and then again what she said was in itself interesting. Indeed, this remarkable man could not do anything like ordinary people; for all his life he had been taking chances, and seemed only happy when flirting with the Grim Reaper, snapping his fingers in the face of Death as it were. Here he was engaged in the new whirl of mastering the air as a bird-man; and accepting the challenge of a young millionaire to drive his aeroplane over a certain distance within so many minutes, part of the course being the wide St. Lawrence, which, as yet, had never so far as was known, been bridged by a flying machine.

Tressie had resumed her seat, and seemed endeavoring to appear quite at her ease; she was not an ordinary girl, and since her father had of late led the life of a public entertainer it followed that his daughter must have come in contact with many specimens of humanity, and learned to look out for herself much better than the usual run of her sex; but when I say that, please do not imagine for a minute that she was in the slightest degree bold, for while such experiences may give one confidence it does not follow that the natural modesty which a young girl has inherited need be displaced; for it was this very thing that had attracted me toward her in the beginning, when I watched the captain preparing to make an ascent at a fair which certain business compelled me to attend, and from which by the way I took a notorious counterfeiter, though no one ever knew the fact beyond a select few.

We fell into a conversation, though I do not now remember what its nature may have been, for I was more taken up with studying her features than thinking about the subject under discussion; but now and then it struck me as rather queer that Captain Simeon should maroon himself upon this island, as though anxious to get away from his fellows in order to complete some wonderful invention upon which he may have been working, and which of course must have a close connection with up-to-date aeroplanes.

And really I considered that it was next door to criminal to leave this pretty girl all alone here while he went ashore to do business; but then, of course he would not be apt to look at things in that light, since he had taught her how to use a gun in case of necessity; and that faithful guardian of a Tige might be depended on to protect her from all ordinary harm.

There were times too when I fancied she looked a trifle nervous, as though perhaps thoughts of her father obtruded themselves, and she might be wondering how she would take the fact of some blundering pilgrim landing upon his private preserves—these inventors are a suspicious class as a rule, and it might be he would even suspect that I had purposely come out in the expectation of making some discovery in connection with his secret work.

I hoped not—you see, just about that time I concluded that it would be much better to have the friendship of Captain Morgan than his ill will; and perhaps I might as well go a little further and admit that the fact of his having a daughter had considerable to do with this desire on my part.

Of course seeing that she was somewhat nervous concerning the air-man, I took it upon myself to chase away the doubts that were assailing her; and really, it did seem next door to ridiculous to imagine that this little inland storm could affect the adventurer who for many years had laughed in the teeth of perils many times more serious, and baffled the efforts of Fate to drag him down.

During the course of our talk I incidentally learned that there had been a shed erected at one end of the island, where the captain kept his aeroplane when not ashore; it was not there just then, for he had taken a spin over to the club house that afternoon while the air was still; and of course would not think of returning by the same means while a storm threatened; for the captain apparently did have some discretion in spite of his monumental nerve.

It was his habit to come off in a rowboat at such times; and Tressie had looked for him to arrive up to the very minute I came on the scene; though what I had to say about the wild waves and vicious wind gave her new apprehensions that he might not be able to reach her until morning.

I had no complaint coming in connection with the cards dealt to me by an inscrutable fortune, and even contemplated spending several pleasant hours in the delightful company of this little witch of the storm clouds, unmarred by a single regret concerning the delay to my plans.

In case the captain did not appear I had already decided in my mind just how

(Continued on page nineteen.)

Slain on the Stage;

Or, The Minna Gorsden Mystery

By GEORGE T. HARGREAVES

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CHAPTER X.

THE ACTRESS CONFRONTED.

THE reporter's first move was to seek out the home of Miss Carringford. He felt that in her he might find an ally, so clutching his coat pocket to assure himself that the stiletto he had discovered was still there, he hurried into Sixth avenue and then up to Fifty-seventh street. On the way he rapidly revolved the scattered ends of his discoveries and tried to weave them into coherence.

It was growing more apparent to him that Minna Gorsden's life had been sacrificed because she was the wife of Chester Hawkins. Two other women were evidently rivals for the affection that had belonged legitimately to the slain woman.

Both Hazel Carringford and Annabelle Wesson were in love with Hawkins. Phil could not bring himself to believe yet that either of them had been the murderer of the fair actress. Still it was plain that both would be better satisfied to have the wife of the man they craved out of the way. But was the love of either of them deep enough to drive her to so dastardly a crime in order to remove the obstacle that prevented her from securing him as a husband? That was the rub.

Superficially, he would have decided that Hawkins himself was the more likely to be guilty. In all probability there was some woman among all his worshipers that he would like to make his wife. But so long as Minna Gorsden lived, that was impossible for she had refused to divorce him or to allow him to get a decree of liberty from marriage bonds.

So what more likely than that he thrust the long, keen stilletto through the canvas wing and into the faithful, unswerving heart of his own wife? Yet Phil, by some intuition that he could not silence, found himself unable to think of this recreant husband as the real slayer. And intuition, so the great sleuths of the day tell us, is the detective's truest guide.

Phil found the home of Miss Carringford to be in a handsome apartment house just a few doors west of Fifth avenue. A glance at the cards over the speaking tubes in the marbled vestibule showed him that she was located on the third floor. The elevator speedily carried him there.

He pushed the button at the door to the apartment of the actress. A white-capped maid opened it promptly. To his inquiry she answered that Miss Carringford had just come in and that she would dislike to disturb her unless his mission was imperative.

"It is certainly that," declared the reporter, passing over his card.

As the maid left him, Phil stepped into the hall. From there he obtained a view of the rooms beyond. The first appeared to be the diningroom. Beyond that, as the maid opened the door leading into it, he saw a bedroom.

And on her knees beside the bed, in an attitude of prayer, was Hazel Carringford!

The reporter felt strangely nonplussed at the scene. In a flash recurred to him the scene in Chester Hawkins' dressingroom when he had beheld this woman grope over the spot where he had subsequently found the weapon with which the murder of Minna Gorsden was undoubtedly committed.

Could it be possible for the woman apparently concerned in that crime to return from the scene of that tragedy and give herself up to religious devotions?

His soul revolted from the idea.

Bewildered by the sight, he withdrew to the outer door and awaited the maid's return. She came after a long delay with the announcement that the actress felt indisposed but would accord Mr. Pry a few moments' interview.

There were traces of tears in the woman's eyes as she glanced up at Phil when he was ushered into the cosy drawingroom of the apartment. His quick eye noted the richness of its furnishings, the handsomely framed portraits of famous stage celebrities which adorned the walls and the daintily bound volumes of stage lore that lay in profusion on the massive mahogany table. He gave her credit for most excellent taste.

"I am sorry to intrude, Miss Carringford," he began diffidently, "but certain facts have come to my notice concerning the death of Miss Gorsden that lead me to believe that you may have some vital information regarding that distressing affair in addition to what you have already given the police."

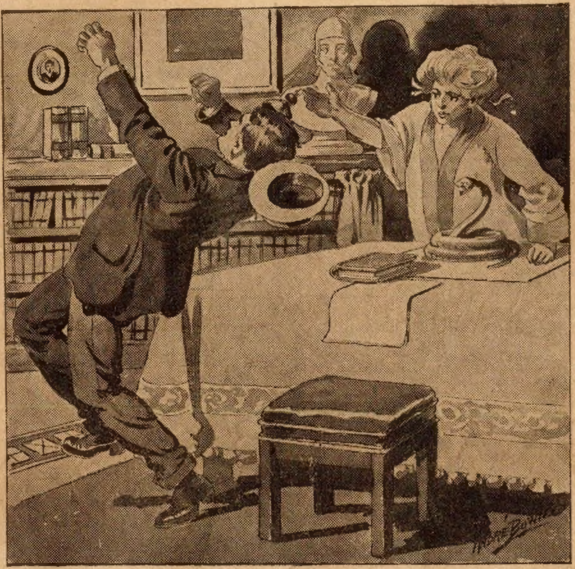
"You are mistaken, sir," she returned decidedly. "I told them all that I knew."

"You will pardon me for the correction," continued the reporter, "but after witnessing the scene which Miss Gorsden's mother created on the stage of the Thespis Theater tonight I am confident that you can supply some facts which—while not bearing directly on the murder"—Phil dwelt long and impressively on the harsh word—"will, at least, aid materially in clearing up the mystery."

"Oh I see," the actress ejaculated sharply, "you want me to reveal my private affairs to you."

"The law is entitled to know them if they will help to uncover the dastardly perpetrator of this crime," insisted the reporter.

"Well, let the law find them out then," she flaunted proudly. "You are only a reporter. I do not purpose to have my private affairs exploited for public gratification in the newspapers."



It caught him fairly above the temple.

"It were better for you to explain certain things and have yourself cleared," urged Phil, "than to have even a breath of suspicion attach to you."

"Suspicion?" she demanded. "Who says any suspicion can attach to me?"

"When certain acts of yours of which I happened to be a witness become known to the police," declared the reporter forcibly, "you are certain to be faced with very serious questions, even accusations."

Alarm shot from the speaking eyes of the actress. Her teeth closed down on her under lip until it whitened to the color of her pale cheeks. She gripped the arm of the easy chair in which she reclined until her fingers appeared steeled enough to sink into the wood.

"Questions? Accusations?" she blurted in heat. "I tell you I had no part in that dreadful affair. I don't know how it was done or who did it. And I'll not sit here and continue to listen to your miserable insinuations."

She arose with the haughtiness of a queen and reached forward to strike the bell upon the table.

Phil darted up and brushed her hand away.

"Miss Carringford," he hinted; "if you will kindly hear me out, I can assure you that it will be for your benefit. If you are innocent, what I may say will help you to clear yourself. If you are guilty, you will at least be forwarned."

The actress sank proudly back into her chair.

"In the first place," went on Phil, "it might be wise for us not to be overheard."

Dominated by the quiet insistence in her caller's manner, Miss Carringford promptly arose and closed the doors leading into the room. Then she returned in a bewildered way to her chair. "Miss Carringford," the reporter resumed, "if I were to tell you that you were seen in the dressingroom of Chester Hawkins tonight, what would you say?"

The actress laughed shortly but in a strained way and the quick flash of surprise that filled her eyes did not escape the visitor's observation.

"Don't show your stage ignorance, young man," she declared with a note of derision in her voice. "That's a custom—maybe not within the bounds of strict propriety but still practiced by we people of the mimic world."

"But you paid this visit in the abscene of Hawkins," persisted Phil.

"Only to see whether he were in his room or not," she flamed defiantly, though the reporter was sure he could see apprehension growing in her face.

"But you did not look for Hawkins in his room," persevered he with an emphasis that seemed to make each word a thrust. "You—looked—for—something—else."

The bosom of the woman heaved tumultuously. Her shapely hands gripped themselves anew upon the arm of her chair as if to hold her from some tempestuous outbreak. She searched the face of the Star man with a glaring eye that seemed to want to read his very soul. She struggled visibly to find the right words to match this incisive young man confronting her.

"A lie, that's a lie!" she blurted. "You've been spying on me, haven't you? I don't believe you're a reporter, as you claim, at all but one of those hounding police detectives."

"You're mistaken, madam," declared Phil, flatly. "I am a reporter but I may tell you that no detective is more anxious to solve the mystery in Minna Gorsden's murder than I am. And further, I can tell you that no detective up to the present hour has learned as much about that murder as I have." He paused before he launched his next blow. "And the most I have learned was when I saw you in Chester Hawkin's dressing-room."

"You saw me?" she ejaculated. "Oh, you're bluffing me! You're trying to make me think you know more than you do. But you can't fool me!"

"Miss Carringford," the reporter went on impressively, as he prepared to deliver his most crushing announcement, "you will know that I am not bluffing when I tell you that I was in Hawkins' room when you were there, that I saw you over the umbrella stand in the corner, that when you had gone I found what you had placed there. Here it is!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE DREAM.

With a flourish Phil drew forth the stiletto and held it before the eyes of the astonished actress.

She gave one awestruck glance at the weapon. Then one hand clutched her bosom convulsively, her pallid lips framed a gasping "Oh, my God!" and she dropped in a dead faint.

Phil, forgetful of the secret exultation he felt at having confronted Miss Carringford so dramatically, and having wrung so striking an acknowledgment of apparent guilt from her distressed lips, made haste to try to restore her to consciousness.

He rang for the maid, and when she appeared, ordered her to bring water and smelling salts. Awaiting her return, he gently chafed the chill hands of the actress. The application of cold water to her brow and of the salts to her nostrils quickly brought her back to sensibility.

She looked up startled at her visitor. Then her face grew strained with fear. Her lips moved spasmodically, but the words they framed were incoherent. The reporter was conscious of a wave of pity sweeping through him, yet he dared not voice his feeling lest he check the confession he felt she was about to make.

As he waited expectantly, the actress again glanced at the stiletto which Phil had laid upon the table. He saw her eyes go tightly shut as if she would blot out the sight. Then she turned to her maid, and faintly told her to leave the room.

When the servant had closed the door behind her, Miss Carringford with an effort whispered:

"What is it you wish to know?"

"The truth and all of it," answered Phil, soberly.

"I did not kill her, I did not, I did not!" exclaimed the actress, suddenly rising from her chair and beating the air wildly.

"Be calm, my good woman," urged the Star man, as he gently forced her back into her chair. Then when she had partly calmed herself, he continued: "If you did not kill her, how is it that you knew where the knife was with which the fatal blow was struck?"

"How do you know it is the knife that was used?"

"It still bears the fresh bloodstains," declared Phil, whereat the woman appeared again as if about to drop into a swoon.

"Believe me, please believe me," she moaned, as she stretched out her hands in supplication. "I did not do it. I did not, as God is my judge!"

"But why are you familiar, then, with the weapon that was used?"

"I'll tell you the truth and all of it," she exclaimed. Then as she clasped Phil's arm impetuously, she cried: "You'll believe me, won't you? I've had a dreadful life. I suppose your accusations are my punishment. But, as I live, they are undeserved."

The reporter scrutinized the face of the actress carefully for some trace of guile. He could find none. Then he gently withdrew his arm from her grasp. It occurred to him that she might be trying to practice some of the siren's wiles upon him in an effort to blind him in his investigation. But he did not propose to be circumvented thus.

"Well, the truth, then," he demanded.

"It's a long story," Miss Carringford began, with downcast eyes and in moving tones that might well have fitted some tragic scene on the stage. "It goes back several years—as many as fifteen. I was an actress on the Pacific coast. So was Minna Gorsden. So was Chester Hawkins. We appeared in a stock company in San Francisco together for nearly two years. She fell in love with Hawkins——"

The narrator paused in embarrassment.

"And so did you," volunteered Phil.

The actress nodded her handsome head solemnly. Then she continued:

"She won him, and they were married secretly as you heard her mother tell on the stage tonight. But I never knew of that marriage until less than a year ago. And though she won him, I never ceased to love him." Her voice sank to almost inaudible tones. She twined her shapely fingers in revery.

After a pause in which the reporter recognized that the woman was deliberating how to proceed, she looked up at him with a mistiness in her eyes that betokened tears.

"And I believed he loved me," she sighed painfully. "He should have loved me, anyway—for I was all the world to him—I gave up all for him. For three years here in the East he was everything to me, and I thought I was everything to him. Then the foolish matinee girls began to show him attention. That turned his head and made him—forget—those to whom he owed—a duty. I was one of these."

A dry sob welled up from the bosom of the distressed woman.

"You asked him to marry you?" quizzed Phil.

"Ah, time and time again," she answered. "Asked him to do me the justice my devotion to him deserved. But he kept putting me off and putting me off, with one specious promise and another, until I finally wormed from him the revelation that he could not marry me or any one else, because he was already the husband of Minna Gorsden. Then I hated her—hated her more than I had in those early days on the stage when we were both striving for a reputation and she won Chester away from me. But kill her? No, no; my hate is not sufficient for that."

"And this Annabelle Wesson? What do you know of her?" interrogated the reporter.

Miss Carringford sniffed contemptuously.

"A scheming upstart, that's all!" she declared passionately. "She schemed to get him away from me, and she got him. She's crazy over him. A worse slave to

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* * *

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* * *

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* * *

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him than I ever was—and God knows I was foolish enough. She dislikes me because I was once so devoted to him. She's jealous of me. Her venomous tongue has many times tried to hurt me."

Phil listened with a kind of fascination to this sordid narrative of the loves and hates of the stage. He had heard in newspaper experience that the manner of life of stage folk was not always laid in the lines of decorum. But he had held no idea that people of the mimic world were prey to so tragic experiences in real life.

"But, Miss Carringford," he suggested quietly, "while your story throws much light on the past, it fails to illuminate the circumstances under which I found you in Hawkins' dressingroom. Can you explain them?"

"Ah, that is most strange, Mr. Pry," she replied, with more assurance. "I hardly expect you to believe what I say. Yet it is God's truth, as all I have told you is."

"Let's hear it, anyway," said Phil kindly.

"Well, you see it was this way," she began diffidently. "Just before the discovery was made that Minna had been killed, Miss Wesson and myself came off stage together. We make our exit at practically the same time and through the same door. She goes out first. As I followed her last night, she seized me violently by the arm and shook me. 'Here, you come with me,' she whispered, 'you're ill'."

The actress paused in her narrative, looking up into the reporter's face keenly to learn if she could find written there belief in her story. But Phil's countenance was impassive, though his brain was busy. She did not continue until he interjected, "Well?"

"The next thing I knew I was sitting in my dressingroom with Annabelle leaning over me, vigorously chafing my hands and cheeks. 'You've fainted, did you know it?' she inquired excitedly. I shook my head in the negative. I did not feel weak and exhausted as a person does when she comes out of a fainting fit. As soon as my eyes opened and I saw where I was, I was able to get right up on my feet and walk about as though I had been normal all the time. I could not understand it then, and I do not understand it yet."

"You did not tell the police about this experience when they quizzed you about the murder?" queried the reporter.

"No, I did not think it had any bearing on the case."

"I'm not so sure," said Phil with forehead wrinkled thoughtfully. "But go on with your story. How came I to find you in Hawkins' dressingroom?"

"That's as strange as what I've just told you. Last night, of course, I went home in terrible excitement. I sat up for hours. I was afraid really to go to bed. At last, mind-weary, I flung myself down on my bed without disrobing. Troubled sleep later came to me. But I had no sooner become unconscious than the most remarkable dream came. In my sleep I beheld myself hurrying on my way into Chester's room. In my hand I bore a long, shining knife that looked for all the world like the one you have just shown me. Its point was stained red. I looked around—in the dream—for a good place to hide it. It seemed to burn my hands. Finally I sighted the umbrella stand. I glided over to it and dropped the weapon within the folds of an umbrella. Of course, Mr. Pry, you fully understand that this was all in my dream?"

Phil nodded soberly. This straightforward story of the actress was confusing him. He had regarded her as open to as great suspicion of having committed the murder as either Hawkins or Miss Wesson. But he had to admit to himself that her narrative was not without a power of carrying conviction to a listener.

"When I awakened fully, the dream had so great a hold on me," she went on hurriedly, "that I was not certain that it was a dream. I began to feel that it was, in part, at least, a reality. So when I got to the theater for rehearsal tonight, the first thing I did was to hurry down to Chester's dressingroom and see whether the knife was really hidden in the umbrella. And, remarkable to relate, it was—lying down in the folds of the umbrella where no one would have thought of looking for it."

"You are sure, Miss Carringford," the reporter broke in, "that you did not put the knife in the umbrella yourself?"

"My God, no!" she exclaimed with startled eyes.

"You are certain that you did not drop it into it's hiding-place when you leaned over the stand?"

"May God strike me dead if I did!" came dramatically. "But how do you know how I leaned over the stand?"

"I saw you," responded Phil quietly. "I was concealed in Hawkins' wardrobe."

"Then you must know I didn't hide it."

"No, your back was turned to me. Besides," the Star man spoke impressively, "when you turned to go out I saw a smile of satisfaction and hate on your face."

"Listen, sir," she gasped, leaning toward him pantingly, "I'll tell you the truth and you'll understand. I was glad for a moment that he was the murderer, for it seemed like a punishment upon him for the wrongs he had done me and—her."

"And you will testify to this against him?"

"Oh, I can't say that!" she broke forth excitedly. "I loved him once, oh, so much!" She paused a moment to crush her hands nervously. Then she concluded in a whisper: "And I'm afraid I love him still."

Phil slowly re-rolled the stiletto in his handkerchief and thrust it into his pocket. There were more questions on his lips for Miss Carringford to answer, but he wanted to know other things before he asked them. He withdrew after extracting a promise from her that she would see him again whenever he desired to call.

"You don't think I'm guilty now, do you?" she pleaded, as he started for the door.

"Not as guilty as I thought you were when I came here tonight," he replied equivocally. Nor, though she pleaded for a more definite answer, would he further explain himself.

On the sidewalk outside he looked at his watch. It marked 10:45.

"Time to begin looking up Janet Price," he muttered. "Wonder what that scoundrel Hawkins has been trying to do with her?"

CHAPTER XII.

SOUBRETTE AND SNAKE.

Phil recalled the addresses that Actor Torrey had given him of Chester Hawkins' homes. One—his legal address—was at No. 99 West Sixtieth street; the other, probably his incognito address, was at No. 99 West Sixty-first street.

"I suppose he picked out similar numbers," grinned the Star man to himself, "to save himself the trouble of remembering a number of different ones. He'd probably have a regular harem if all his loves were sheltered under a single roof."

The reporter concluded to try the West Sixtieth street house first. It was nearer and there he decided he would be most likely to gain admittance.

A five-minute walk brought him to the front of a marble-fronted apartment house. The hall boy informed him that Chester Hawkins was housed on the fifth floor, but that he was not in. He had gone away in a hurry about ten minutes before.

"I'll go up, anyway," returned the reporter, and he entered the elevator.

A maid took his card at the Hawkins door.

"Please say," he instructed her, as she moved away, "that my mission is a vital one."

The servant was back after some delay.

"Mr. Hawkins is not in," she reported, "but there is a friend here who says you may come in and wait if you wish."

Phil followed the maid through the narrow hall, across a diningroom that showed remnants of a recent meal, and on into a small saloon whose furnishings were oddly out of order.

But what struck and held his attention was the figure of a woman at the center table. Gowned in a loose kimono, from out of whose depths peeked voluptuous arms, a neck of rare curves, and finely moulded shoulders, she sat with her elbows supporting her chin and looking intently into the eyes of a glistening blue-green snake that had uncoiled itself from the confines of a silken bag which lay beside the electrolier, and was now rearing its quivering head.

The reporter paused, less in fright than in astonishment. His active mind quickly solved the riddle in the strange spectacle.

"She's got a snake for a pet," he thought. "This is to be a sort of a grand stand play on her part."

"Quiet, quiet, Sweetie," the woman cooed to the serpent, as it shook its long neck—as though conscious of the presence of an intruder. "We've a caller—a newspaper man. So you must be on your good behavior."

The snake settled into a steady poise that brought its head and its red-pronged fangs within less than a foot of the woman's face.

As Phil stepped farther into the room, his hand went to the hip pocket of his trousers, where he always carried a revolver. He felt relieved when he found the weapon in its usual place. No telling when he would have occasion to use it, he thought, in a situation like this.

When the maid had withdrawn, closing the door, the reporter bent over to glance into the face of the woman. He recognized her at once.

She was Annabelle Wesson, the soubrette.

"If you'll be very quiet and decorous, Mr.—Mr. Pry," she murmured sweetly, as though addressing the serpent, "Sweetie here won't give us a bit of trouble. He likes visitors sometimes. He ought to like you because you will put him in the paper, won't you?"

The Star man realized that the remarkable scene had been set for his benefit, that the actress hoped to achieve a little publicity from it.

"Along with his mistress, of course," he suggested, cynically.

"To be sure, sir," she went on softly, her eyes still set on those of her pet. "A snake is a common enough thing. But a snake and an actress make quite a novelty, now, don't they?"

"The first time I have seen them to-

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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The First Wife's Son;

Or, A BROTHER'S BIRTHRIGHT

By Granville Osborne

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CHAPTER III.

THE grounds at the Linn, their ancestral estate, lay in the fulness of their summer beauty beneath the unflecked blue of the June sky. The afternoon was already far advanced, and the trees were casting long shadows on the emerald turf and the white gravel of the drive.

In the rose garden, with its mellow brick walls and its quaint old sundial, the queen of flowers was reigning in all her lovely gory. The air was sweet with a thousand perfumes, and the splash of the fountain mingled musically with the gay voices and laughter from the croquet-ground beyond the wall. Lady Gower was lying back in a straw chair, a parasol of rose silk and creamy lace shading her from the sun. Though nearly twenty years had passed since her return with her husband from South Africa she was still a strikingly lovely woman. There was not a silver thread in her golden hair, and the fair face was hardly marked with a line. It was only in the watchful look in the dark eyes, in the compression—now habitual—of the lips that years of plotting and scheming and fierce self-control had left their mark.

A hand was suddenly laid on her shoulder. She looked up quickly, her face mechanically assuming a smile.

"Tired of croquet, Rachel?"

"I haven't been playing at all!" said the young woman, with a laugh, as she dropped into a low chair by Lady Gower's side and rested her white fingers on her wallet. "Eddie and Terry have been playing enthusiastically, and Leslie and I have been sitting on a seat talking."

Lady Gower's face had darkened. It must have been a very interesting conversation," she said, a touch of sarcasm in her tones. "Won't you tell me what it was all about?"

"Certainly," Rachel replied simply, her truthful gray eyes looking right into the beautiful face opposite to her.

"It was a confidential talk to be sure—but you are Leslie's mother."

"How good of you to remember that!" Cora exclaimed in a tone of irony and playfulness combined. "But Leslie may have meant his part in the confidential talk' for your ears alone. Pray do not betray his confidence by repeating what he has said to you!"

"Oh, nonsense!" Rachel exclaimed, with her musical Irish laugh. She drew her chair a little nearer and looked up in frank admiration into the lovely face which was softened by the rosy shadow cast by the parasol. "Leslie was talking about himself," Rachel went on.

"What an interesting subject!" But now Lady Gower was smiling. She had detected the admiring look in Rachel's eyes, and to Cora admiration was still the bread of life.

"Certainly it is an interesting subject. You are a wife and mother, Lady Gower, and I am a widow; so we've both had enough of experience to know that men—especially young men—like to talk about themselves; but, seriously, I fear poor Leslie is in some sort of trouble. If I had been a romantic girl—like Terry, for example—I should have hesitated to speak on the subject; but you are his mother, and you ought to——"

"Yes, yes!" Lady Gower interposed. She was angry and jealous, but she could hardly help laughing at the tactlessness of this clear-eyed, honest young woman. What woman but Rachel Dene would have told a mother so plainly that her adored son had not confided in her?

"You forget," Lady Gower said, a pathetic little quiver in her voice—"I am not really his mother."

It was not Rachel Dene's habit to make much demonstration of her feelings, but now she gently laid her hand on Lady Gower's.

"You are his mother," she said; "he is the son of your dear husband. And I am sure you could not have loved him more fondly. I believe he is as dear to you as Eddie himself."

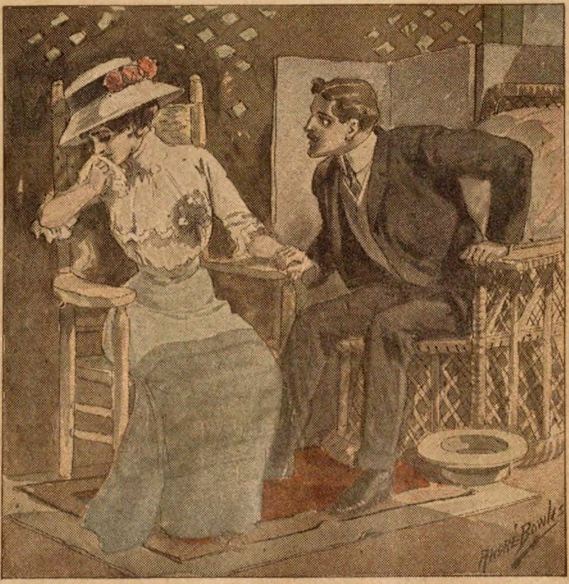
"You are right, Rachel!" Lady Gower replied, with a wild, half-hysterical laugh. "Eddie is not dearer to me than his brother. Poor Eddie! Rachel, do you know I often think that my husband prefers Eddie to Leslie? Have you never thought so yourself? You are so quick at noticing things. Don't you think Sir James thinks more of Eddie?"

"In a sense I believe he does," Rachel replied quietly; "but I do not believe he loves him better—perhaps not so well. You see, Lady Gower, parents do not love their children for their good qualities or their good behavior—or in fact for anything they are. Happy for us it is so! I suppose that their love is an imperfect foreshadowing of the love that is parent to us all."

The two women were silent for a few minutes, Rachel thinking of her own baby, who had lived just long enough to learn to smile at her; Lady Gower, touched and a little puzzled, trying to understand this strange young woman who was sometime so like a frank boy, and again so wise and tender and womanly. Then Cora spoke:

"You mean that Leslie is not so good as Eddie? Well, never mind! I'm not at all offended. Why should I be when Eddie is my own son, and Leslie only my stepson? Isn't it strange that my son should be a model young man and that wild Leslie should be the son of poor Eleanor Marwood—a little woman who couldn't say 'Boo' to a goose—strange, isn't it? I dare say Sir James has said so often, when he has been finding fault with poor Leslie. So Leslie hinted to you that he was in trouble of some sort?"

"He didn't exactly hint," Rachel said puzzled a good deal by Lady Gower's tone; "but from the way he spoke about himself I inferred that there must be some reason for his being so restless and low-spirited. He was comparing himself with Eddie, poor boy, just as we were comparing him just now—wishing that Eddie had been the elder son, as he was more likely to do you and Sir James credit, and that he himself had been trained for some profession. Lady Gower, what is the matter? How white you look! It is very thoughtless of me to be speaking so to you—I am giving you pain!"



"I love you Terry!"

"No, no!" Cora managed to say, "Leslie has debts, he is extravagant, and his father is hard on him, and then the boy gets into low spirits and talks nonsense Absurd! Eddie the eldest son! Poor fellow, he would be utterly miserable in such a position! Don't you agree with me?" and Lady Gower's eager tone seemed to beg an affirmative reply.

"I think he is quite happy as he is," Rachel replied in her calm, impartial way; "but I don't see why he would be wretched if he were the elder and Leslie the younger son. Oh, I know that you are thinking of his physical unfitness! I don't pretend to misunderstand you or to ignore it, but Eddie is so good—he has such a strong, manly, independent character that I believe he would be able to forget that and to make other people forget it. After all, people are as a rule, quite ready to take you at your own valuation, are they not? If Eddie were moody and miserable and unmanly they would give him the pity he expected, but he is so brave and light-hearted that pity from the rest of us would be merely an absurd impertinence. What a good son he is to you, Lady Gower! I think he fairly worships you."

As Rachel Dene smiled up into the fair face of her companion she was surprised to see Cora Gower's eyes suddenly fill with tears and the usually firm lips tremble.

"Here they are! No, it is Eddie by himself," Lady Gower said, rising, as a young man came through the ivy-clad arched doorway in the red brick wall and advanced towards them.

"Leslie and Terry are strolling about the grounds," he said. "Do sit down again, mother, won't you? You've got to give me some tea, you know. Cold? Oh, that doesn't matter."

He took a seat by her side. Eddie Gower was below middle-height, and though his step was light and his movements were wonderfully quick and vigorous, a serious spinal deformity made him almost a hunch-back; but his face—though the pale, clear complexion was perhaps somewhat too transparent for good health—had none of that drawn look which is usually a characteristic of those who suffer from any personal deformity. It was not exactly a handsome face, its chief beauty lying in the large eyes, of a violet-blue color, fringed with black lashes; but it was a face which at once charmed and inspired trust and confidence. There was a rare mixture of sweetness and strength in the whole contenance, with its broad forehead and delicate, firmly cut mouth. The finely-shaped head was covered with dark curls. Eddie Gower looked much older than his twenty-one years, partly because of the manly strength of his face, partly because of the thoughtful expression in his dark eyes; but just now he seemed to be full of a boyish light-heartedness and gaiety as he chatted with his mother and Rachel.

Presently Rachel rose to go. Lady Gower and Eddie accompanied her through the doorway that led from the rose-garden out into the grounds beyond. The afternoon sunlight lay in long bars and patches of orange gold between the trees. The river was singing softly, a parting sunray making a glint of brightness on its breast; and in among the greenery there were two white figures slowly strolling along the river bank. "Shall I hail them?" Eddie asked, raising his hand to trumpet a "hallo."

"No, no, don't!" Mrs. Dene said, laughing. "It is not worth while disturbing them to say 'Good-by' to a near neighbor like me. Good afternoon, Lady Gower!"

The two women shook hands and Rachel and Eddie passed through the gates. Lady Gower stood for a few minutes looking after them. Her woman's eyes had noted the faint-flush which had sprung into Rachel Dene's cheek, the clouding of the clear eyes as they glanced at those two white figures among the trees; and she could not but think as she watched the young widow pass along the shady country road with

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Eddie at her side, how young Rachel looked for her years, how tall and straight and slender and pretty she was.

"Can she care for my boy?" Cora Cowers asked herself. "Oh, absurd! She must be ten years his senior; and she spoke about him so frankly; and yet I don't remember ever having seen Rachel Dene blush before."

She turned and began slowly to retrace her steps, her long shirts sweeping the gravel of the avenue, the chequered light and shade from the sunlight and the foliage of the trees playing on her stately figure, on the fair, downcast face.

"So he is 'better' than my boy!" she said to herself, with a smile, half sad, half bitter. "They are saying that about him. Instead of pitying him as I so wisely foresaw they would do. Why, I don't pity him myself! I find myself looking up to him—yes, actually looking up to him sometimes! Everybody seems to turn to him for help and advice, even Jim himself—and my poor Leslie most of all. Strange! I have grown accustomed to call him Leslie even in my own thoughts. How well I have learned my lesson!"

The sunlight suddenly vanished from the grass, the sparkle from the river. It was darkening ominously overhead, and a light wind rose, and rustled the trees, but Cora Gower hardly noticed the change. She continued to walk slowly up the avenue, absorbed in her thoughts. The hard, self-contained expression of the beautiful face had given place to one of deep sadness.

"What a good son he is to me." She repeated Rachel's words. "Yes, he is very good to me and to his father— and to poor Leslie, and I—I love him only second to my own son and my husband. Who could help loving him? If I only had not wronged him! If I could only undo the past!"

CHAPTER IV.

Meanwhile the young man and woman by the banks of the river were equally unobservant of the threatening shower. They had plunged in among the trees till their white-clad figures were no longer visible from the avenue. Following a winding path, they came presently to an arbor embowered in honeysuckle and scarlet creeper.

"How pretty it is with all its red blossoms out!" Terry Ormonde exclaimed, as she reached out her hand to pluck a spray of the vivid blooms. Then she chanced to look up into her companion's face, and for the first time noted something odd and embarrassed in his glance.

A dim apprehension of what was coming made the girl's heart beat a little faster and added somewhat to the rich bloom in her pretty brunette face. She told herself that the thought was too utterly ridiculous; she was severe upon her own egotism and vanity, in imagining such a thing possible. Nevertheless she wished very earnestly that she had not thoughtlessly come so far.

She and Leslie and Eddie had been playmates ever since the Gowers had come to the Linn. Her father's was the nearest house to Sir James' and the children had grown up side by side. It was only recently that Terry had begun to realize, with an unaccountable sinking of heart, that the old boy and girl relations were no longer possible. But Leslie—oh, she hoped he was not going to say anything foolish!

Involuntarily the girl's hand dropped. "Do you want a flower?" the young man asked, with a rather awkward eagerness. He plucked some of the red flowers and she took them; but she did not fasten them in her dress, as she would have done simply and naturally if that disturbing thought of a minute ago had not entered her mind.

"Will you sit down, Terry?" Leslie went on. "I have something I want to say to you."

Terry's first thought was to find some way to escape, to put him off by some means or other, to remain in ignorance of what he was going to say. Then she rebuked herself for the selfishness of the thought. He looked pale and troubled. Suppose he were merely in some sort of distress and wished to ask her advice, her sympathy? It would be quite natural in her old playmate.

They entered the arbor and sat down. For a minute they were silent, she playing nervously with the red flowers in her hands, he sitting pale and with downcast eyes.

They were a handsome pair.

Terry Ormonde was a brunette, rather small and slight, with masses of curly, dark brown hair, large brown eyes, a tiny, rosy mouth, and a rich, dark complexion. Leslie Gower was tall and broad-shouldered, very fair with bright blue eyes and chestnut hair. Perhaps his face was a little spoiled by an irresolute mouth and chin; but he was on the whole, a fine, handsome youth, and, if not very highly respected by his numerous friends and companions, was certainly well liked.

"Terry," he said, breaking the silence, "I can't keep silence any longer! I love you. I don't know whether you have seen it or not—they say that women always do see those things. You're the one girl in the world I want to be my wife. Terry do you care for me—even a little? You do, I am sure!"

"Oh, Leslie, don't—please don't!"

"Don't? Why not, Terry? Why, how you are trembling and shaking, little girl! You aren't afraid of me, are you? We've known each other far too long for that. Couldn't you see I loved you, Terry?" Emboldened by her silence, Leslie had laid his hand in hers and was looking pleadingly into her lovely face. His nervousness had given place to a certain measure of his usual self-confidence. After all it was exceedingly likely that Terry did care for him. There was no one else—at least, no one else he knew of. He was not accustomed to underrate his own attractions. Terry's silence was probably the prelude to the sweetly murmured "Yes" which would make him the happiest man in the world.

"Terry! Leslie! Are you there? Don't you know that the rain is pouring? I've brought you cloaks and umbrellas." With an exclamation of impatience Leslie leaped to his feet. Eddie appeared in the opening of the arbor, his arms full of cloaks and umbrellas."

"Tomorrow, at five—meet me here!" Leslie whispered imperiously. The girl inclined her head; there was no time for argument. In a minute Eddie was buttoning a cloak on her, and they hurriedly made their way back to the house.

* * * * * * *

"I ought to have answered him—I ought to have told him at once and plainly that I do not love him!" Terry said to herself when she was in her own home. "I was taken by surprise, but I was very weak, very cruel, and I did wrong. Poor Leslie! What a strange thing that he should love me, while I——"

She broke off, her cheeks crimsoning, and hurriedly began to dress for dinner. Her toilet was a very simple one—white crepon dress, a string of pearls around her pretty neck. The furniture and appointments of her room were as simple as her dress.

It was long since Colonel Ormonde had been able to afford any luxuries either to himself or to his daughter. The stately old house, with its lofty bare rooms so sorely in need of paper and paint; the neglected grounds, the unkept drive, the empyt lodges and coachhouses—all alike told the tale of poverty and debts.

Tonight, when Terry entered the diningroom, she noticed, with a feeling of pain, how weary and harassed her father looked. How old he was growing! The thin gray hair, the anxious lines, the restless look of anxiety—surely these had never before been so noticeable. The girl longed to go to him, to put her arms about his neck and comfort him. With a feeling of impatience she sat through the formal, frugal meal, the old butler moving slowly and stiffly to and fro, her father and she talking with effort on indifferent subjects, each busy with his or her own thoughts.

"How different from the Gowers!" Terry could not help thinking. "Theirs is such a happy home!"

At last she and her father were alone together. She came and sat on a low seat by his side while he lighted his cigar. It was not his habit to talk very freely with his daughter or to indulge in any demonstration of affection. Indeed, till a few years ago Terry had always stood rather in awe of her father; but since she had come to womanhood and the Colonel had seemed so suddenly to show signs of age, the relation between them had been growing gradually warmer and more intimate. Unconsciously the Colonel had grown to feel soothed and cheered by Terry's presence and to take a certain morose pride in her fresh beauty; and tonight he did not repel her when she ventured to timidly lay her hand on his knee. "Father, have you a headache tonight?" 'A little—a little," he replied rather testily. "I've been worried a good deal today—business worries, as usual. Don't question me about them, Teresa! Do let me forget them for half an hour!"

"Yes, try to forget them, father," the girl said, her soft voice sounding like music after his querulous tones.

"It's easy to talk about forgetting them," the Colonel replied irritably. There was silence for a few minutes, and then Colonel Ormonde spoke again, a good deal of embarrassment and uncertainty in his manner.

"Terry, I—There is something I wish to speak to you about. I do not know if you have any idea of what it is."

"No father," the girl replied, raising her brown eyes to his face.

"I saw Sir James Gower the other day," the Colonel went on, "and we—in fact we were talking rather seriously and confidentially. Sir James told me him—something concerning you yourhim—somehting concerning you yourself, Terry." There was no longer any doubt that Terry understood her father. The blush which dyed her face from brow to chin was sufficient reply.

"I see you understand me, Terry. To put it plainly, Sir James told me that his son loved you and was anxious to know your feelings towards him. I do not know if he has said anything to you yourself."

Terry's eyes were downcast, the long lashes sweeping the rounded cheeks, which were still brightly flushed; but she suddenly looked up.

"Which of his sons?" she asked.

There was a strange note of pain and eagerness in the girl's voice which gave something almost of tragedy to a ques-

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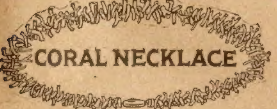
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tion that might easily have provoked a smile but Colonel Ormonde saw merely the absurdity of the question and laughed rather impatiently.

"Really, Terry, doesn't that sound rather childish? Which could it be? You know yourself—it is just a piece of 'young ladyish affectation to pretend that you do not know—that Leslie Gower has been paying you marked attention lately. Leslie is his father's heir, is in a position to marry and of a suitable age; while Eddie is a year your junior, a second son, and—well"—and Colonel Ormonde shrugged his own straight shoulders—"he is hardly a match physically for a pretty girl." Terry's face had whitened and she shrank away from her father as if she had received a blow. She did not attempt to argue, as she might well have done, that those "marked attentions" to which her father referred had been paid to her, in as far as they had been paid at all, by both Sir James Gower's sons, nor that her father's own desires had made him exaggerate the significance of very trifling acts of kindness or courtesy. "Leslie has said nothing definite to you?" Colonel Ormonde went on.

"Yes."

"He has!" The Colonel himself had now turned pale, and a look of anxiety, almost of fear, came into his eyes.

"Terry, do you mean that he has made you an offer? You—how have you answered him?"

"I have not answered him father; but there can be only one answer."

"Surely you don't mean——" Colonel Ormonde made an effort to control his rising excitement and went on in a quieter tone. "Teresa, surely—I am not wrong? I supposed that you did care for Leslie."

"Oh, father, how could you? I never felt anything but friendship for him."

"May I ask, then," said her father, his face darkening with anger and disappointment, "why are you keeping him waiting for your answer?"

"You may well ask that father. I have done wrong; I was very weak and silly. I was taken by surprise, and just sat and listened to Leslie until—until Eddie came to tell me it was raining. But I am to meet Leslie tomorrow, and then I will tell him."

"What will you tell him?"

Terry looked at her father, surprised even more by the agitation he showed than by his question.

"Surely, father," the girl remonstrated gently, "I can only refuse Leslie since I do not love him?"

"Love him! Don't you like him:'

"Certainly I do—very much; but love is quite another thing."

"How do you know that, Terry? The happiest marriages are those which are the result of a long friendship and which are based on a quiet affection and trust, such as you feel for Leslie."

The girl shook her head, smilingly.

"I do like Leslie," she said, "but I don't altogether trust him. I think of him always as a rather foolish boy."

The Colonel made an impatient movement.

"You are talking nonsense, Terry. Leslie is not a boy, and it is you who are childish to slight his offer for the sake of some school-girlish ideal of love. Take time to think, at least; for my sake, as well as your own, do not act hastily!"

The note of appeal, of an almost intolerable anxiety in the fretful voice made the girl look up in a surprise that was mingled with alarm. Colonel Ormonde could not meet her eyes.

"Father, you have some reason for urging me—there is some new trouble. Do tell me everything!"

The Colonel still kept his eyes averted, but he did not resist when Terry, rising, put her arms about his neck.

"Dear father, tell me! Who is to share your cares if I do not? I am a woman now. Tell me as you would have told my mother long ago!"

He drew her to him and kissed her, looking into the soft, truthful eyes, which were dimmed with tears.

The sight of Terry's affection and gentleness, of her innocent beauty, made the part that he was playing seem to him more despicable, but he excused himself to his own conscience, pleading his desperate position, the cares that weighed upon him, even the desire for his daughter's own welfare.

"I will tell you everything, Terry," he said.

CHAPTER V.

On the following afternoon, some time before the hour which Leslie had fixed for their rendezvous, Terry Ormonde was on her way to the Linn. She walked quickly, her eyes downcast, her round cheeks less rosy than usual. Once or twice her lips trembled and tears rose to her eyes.

She was within sight of the rustic gate which gave admittance to that part of the grounds in which the arbor was situated.

How beautiful the place looked! The summer air was filled with the notes of birds, the humming of insects, a thousands sweet scents from trees and flowers. What a beautiful world it was after all! Was it possible to be unhappy in it?

Last night—how unreal it seemed—she had lain awake, weeping and praying, trying to put aside all selfish thoughts and wishes and to decide what was right. Might it not be true that her marriage with Leslie Gower would in many ways be happy and blessed? If she refused, if she stood by and let her father be ruined, would she not be mistaking the sin of selfishness for the sacred duty which she owed to the man she loved?

She had never yet thought of him definitely as the man she loved, and even the mere thought brought a flush to her face. Did he love her? With a trembling, wistful eagerness she recalled those words and looks of his on which she had based her hope that he shared her feeling. She was honest with herself, and did not permit her own longing to allow her to exaggerate anything. No, she certainly was not justified in thinking that—that he loved her. Anything that he had ever said might have been said by a friend, by an old playmate; yet—yet there had come now and then into her dark eyes a look which was all the more unmistakable because it was undefinable.

There was a footfall on the moss beside her. Terry looked up startled, and met the gaze of which she had just been dreaming.

"It is beautiful here at this hour, isn't it?" Eddie Gower said, quickly withdrawing his eyes from her face. "I don't think there is anything in nature quiet so lovely as afternoon sunbeams coming through the trees."

He had taken his place by Terry's side, and they were walking quietly together towards the arbor. Suddenly recollecting herself, the girl turned off the path.

"Let us go a little deeper into the wood," she said. "I want to speak to you."

She had taken a swift resolution, the daring of which made her heart beat wildly as they went side by side through the wilderness of greenery, flecked with sunbeams and starred with flowers. She would confide in Eddie, would tell him of her trouble and ask his advice.

It was natural enough that she should do so she said to herself, with a bitter smile. She knew the hateful thought of the world, that he was, as it were, set apart from others by his physical deformity. People seemed always to turn to him for sympathy, as to a being who had none of the temptations of an ordinary mortal.

Even Sir James and Lady Gower did not speak of Eddie as if he were a young man like his brother, and her father had pooh-poohed the idea that Eddie Gower should be in love.

No one would be shocked or surprised to hear that she had consulted him on such a subject. No one would even guess at the blushing tremors with which she approached it. The vulgar world had ticketed him and her—she was a "pretty girl," and he was a "hunchback."

"When I confide in him," Terry told herself, "if he loves me he must speak. What a dreadful thing I would consider this in another girl—to force a man to declare himself; but if he loves me and is keeping silence because—because of that!"

If he did not love her? If he did not speak? In that case Terry was resolved that since life could have no joy for her, she would try to do as her father wished and as Leslie wished, and sacrifice herself in the hope of bringing a little happiness to others.

"Shall we sit down here?" Eddie asked suddenly when they had reached a mossy bank at the roots of the great sycamore, overshadowing them. They sat down and for some minutes were silent, each keenly conscious of the other's presence.

Terry's white dress brushed the young man's hand; a faint perfume came to him from the cluster of yellow roses at her belt. She had her profile towards him, and his gaze lingered on the pathetic beauty of her face—the pale cheeks, the trembling of the full underlip, the quiver of the long lashes to keep back the tears that had risen to her eyes."

"Terry, you are in trouble, and you want to tell your old friend about it, don't you?"

The tactful words, the tone of brotherly affection, restored to the girl some degree of composure, and she turned to him gratefully.

"Yes," she said simply. "Last night father told me all about his money troubles, and his debts to Sir James. I suppose you know about them, Eddie?"

The young man inclined his head.

"I knew previously that father had debts," Terry went on. " I've known it nearly all my life, I think; but I did not know that he owed your father money."

A slight shadow of anger or contempt darkened Eddie's mobile face.

"Why did he tell you now?" he asked abruptly.

Terry tried to speak, but the words would not come. In their place came burning blushes. The young man moved closer to her and gently laid his hand on hers. "Terry, will you believe that there's nothing I would not do to serve you?" he said in a low voice full of earnestness. "When you told me that you wished to speak to me—about your trouble, as I guessed—I felt that you had done me a great honor. You trust me, don't you? If you feel that there is a danger of your repenting of making me your confidant, do not speak; but if you feel that it will be a relief to you, if you feel able to trust your old friend and playmate—why, then, tell me all about it! You need not feel shy with me," he added, a slight emphasis and a faint,

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GENTLE JABS.

Faint praise never flattered fair lady.

Learning doesn't always indicate wisdom.

Heroes, like sermons, are often made to order.

More people would succeed if more would try.

Where ignorance is bliss it is safe to serve hash.

Truth is mighty, but some of it can be suppressed.

When duty calls some people go—in another direction.

Dodging bad story tellers is one way of avoiding poor relations.

Some men are honest because it is too much trouble to be otherwise.

People who marry for a joke must have a misfit sense of humor.

When you see a couple in a hammock it's a sign they are not yet one.

The most dangerous brand of flattery is the one we ladle out to ourselves.

Treat an inferior as an equal and he'll soon consider himself your superior.

Spinsters and widows never envy a woman who has a husband to support.

Many a man who claims to be self-made has a wife who superintended the job.

If a young man hasn't the cheek to kiss a pretty widow she may be willing to furnish it.

Shortly after a romantic girl faces the parson with the man of her choice, her romance evaporates.

There are but few sure things in this old world. One of them is the uncertainty of a woman's age.

No doubt the airship is all right in its place, but we do not believe in running the thing into the ground.

Some women are miserable because people talk about them, and some others are miserable because they don't.

Usually a man who would rather be right than be President soon acquires a reputation for being poor but honest.

Nine out of ten of the magazine articles on how to choose a husband or how to manage one are written by spinsters.

When a man's wife tells another woman that there are no secrets between herself and her husband he goes out on the back porch and winks at the cat.

(Continued from page seven.)

rather sad smile giving a special significance to the remark.

The color faded from the girl's face, leaving it very pale and she faced him, a strange brightness in her eyes.

"Yes, I do trust you, Eddie," she said softly. "I will tell you everything. Father told me that he was under very deep obligations to Sir James, and that they had had a serious conversation on that and other subjects; and Sir James told father that Leslie cared for me."

Terry's own eyes were downcast now, for, much as she longed to see the effect of her words on her companion, she simply could not look up. Eddie did not speak, but sat gazing right in front of him. "Leslie himself asked me yesterday," the girl said almost in a whisper, "and I have not answered him yet. He is to get my answer today."

There was a pause. It seemed to Terry that he must hear the loud beating of her heart; but still he did not speak.

"Father wishes me to—he would like me—" She faltered.

"To say 'yes' to Leslie? I understand you—I see your difficulty," Eddie said. His voice was very quiet—to the girl it sounded cold.

"I don't suppose," Eddie went on, "that there has been anything in the nature of a bargain suggested between your father and mine. Forgive me using the word. What I mean is that there could not have been threats on my father's part to enforce Leslie's suit, nor fear on your father's side. That kind of thing would be rather out of date, would it not?"

He was looking at her now and smiling—his own kind smile, which irradiated the irregular face. Somehow it seemed to Terry just now far more piteous than tears; but she bravely tried to respond to it.

"Even if it were not out of date," he went on, "I know my father at least too well to think such a thing possible. What you mean is this: Your father would feel his obligations weigh less painfully upon him if there were a connection of this kind between his family and ours. A settlement of some kind would then be possible without painful humiliations. Indeed," he added in a voice that shook slightly, "Leslie will be far more deeply in Colonel Ormonde's debt than your father could be in ours; and—for in a talk like this between friends we must not lose sight of any motive, must we?—Colonel Ormonde would have the satisfaction of feeling that your future was assured, that you would always be safe in the care of a man who loved you."

Terry's slender brown hands were playing with the roses at her belt. Her eyes, large and bright, were fixed on his face. Surely, surely, he would read the despairing appeal in them, eloquent as they were with the love which her maidenhood forbade her to speak. He was looking down at the grass and moss.

Afterwards it seemed to him that he could recall every blade, every spear on the fern fronds, which grew at his feet, every stain on a patch of toadstools near. He saw these things without seeming to see them; they were photographed on his brain during these moments of dumb anguish, of terrible mental conflict.

The case seemed to him clear enough. Terry loved his brother—how else could he interpret her behavior? Her very love, as well as her sense of honor, made it abhorrent to her that her acceptance of Leslie should be a "good bargain," both for her father and herself. Colonel Ormonde—involuntarily Eddie's lips curled at the thought of him—had made the girl feel her love vulgarized and contaminated by his selfish urging of the expediency of the match.

That was why Terry had hesitated. She loved Leslie or she would not have asked him to wait for her reply. She wished to go to him pure from all thoughts save love alone; and it seemed to her sacrilegious that her father's worldly gain should be mixed up with her love. Did he not know her? How pure she was, how honorable, how guileless and noble, how full of all fair thoughts——He checked himself. He must not let himself think in this way. Terry and Leslie were lovers—how blind he had been not to see that sooner! They were well matched. She had come to him for counsel as she might have come to an elder brother. Somehow he had always seemed so much older than she and Leslie, though with a gentle sweetness that was all her own. How mad he had been to dream—as he had done once or twice in brief, sweet moments of delirium—that she might learn to love him!

How ridiculous it was to imagine that once or twice the blush which had crept to her cheeks, the soft light that had shone from her eyes, had been for him! To her he was simply Leslie's brother and her playmate and friend—a true friend perhaps, but a man set apart and not as other men.

The last thought came with a keen pain but without bitterness. It was not Edward Gower's habit to spend much time in commiserating himself when he could help or comfort others. It was stupid perhaps to misunderstand the girl as he did, but it was a stupidity that sprang from his nobility of character. Terry's confusion, her shame, the very force of the feeling which she was longing to make him understand, had made her incoherent. Only a man with more vanity and selfishness than were to be found in Eddie Gower could have guessed what would have been apparent to a woman's eye. Terry forgot this. It seemed to her that he must know what she herself knew so well.

"I have not answered him," the girl said desperately.

"No, but you will answer him, Terry? Leslie loves you; and he is a good fellow, none better. You will make Leslie happy? Think of that first—perhaps your father's affairs will right themselves."

"I haven't answered him," the girl repeated, white to the lips. Her fingers clutched at the roses which dropped from her belt. "I haven't answered him yet."

"No, but you will?" Eddie said again, forcing himself to look up and smile.

"Eddie does not love me," Terry said to herself. A terrible coldness seemed to lay hold on her heart; the world of sunshine and sweet scents and sounds seemed suddenly miles away. Was that her own voice she heard?

"Yes, I will answer him."

"Heaven bless you, dear! Heaven bless you both!"

They had parted, neither of them knew how. Eddie told himself as he wandered through the trees, aimlessly, that he ought to rejoice in sympathy with their joy, but it was idle to try to hide from himself that he was suffering terribly. It was harder than he had thought, more cruel, more bitter; and the worst thing of all was that he could not help doubting if this precious life would be safe in Leslie's hands.

"Mr. Edward! Sir!"

A man servant from the Linn, pale and breathless, came hurrying through the trees.

"Mr. Edward! I was sent for you, sir. Sir James has been thrown from his horse and carried home. My lady has sent for the doctor, but we fear the worst. He is conscious and is asking for you."

CHAPTER VI.

"Leslie—no, Eddie! I must see Eddie!" Sir James Gower said feverishly. "Have they found him yet?"

"Yes, he will be here at once," Cora replied. She had sent servants to search for both of the young men, and in a few minutes Eddie was by his father's bedside.

Leslie could not be found. He was in the arbor listening to Terry Ormonde's low-spoken promise.

"Cora, leave us—send every one way!" Sir James said feebly, "I must see Leslie—Eddie—alone!"

White to the lips his wife bent over the bed.

"Jim, you must see the doctor first. You must not talk, must not excite yourself. Jim, my dear, dear husband——"

But the siren voice could not longer make him deaf to the imperious calls of truth and justice.

Something had told the injured man that medical skill was of no avail, that in a few hours he would leave the world where he had lived and loved, and sinned for the sake of the woman he loved. So short a time remained in which to redress the wrong he had done, but it was not yet too late.

"Leslie—Eddie, I must see you alone," he said to his son. "Let every one else leave the room."

The young man laid his hand on his mother's arm. Naturally he attributed her pallor, the stunned look of terror in her beautiful eyes, to the fear that was chilling his own heart. There was a look in Sir James' face which too plainly gave warning that the end might be near.

"Mother dearest!" Eddie said tenderly; but his tongue faltered when he tried to speak words of comfort and hope.

Lady Gower shrank from his touch. She had loved and still did love the dying man; but one of the most terrible consequences of sin is the gradual hardening and narrowing of the sinner's own heart. Just now the thought which filled Cora Gower with anguish was not that the man she loved lay perhaps on his deathbed, but that his dying lips were about to confess his sin and hers and to deprive her child of what she had schemed to win for him.

She had told herself often, when seized with remorse, that she was tired of the base part that she was playing, that the discovery of the truth would bring her nothing but relief. Shame? What was the public shame of standing branded as an impostor compared with the shame which she was compelled to endure daily in the presence of her husband, of her own son, of Eleanor's son, whom she had wronged and who looked at her so kindly and fondly, with eyes full of perfect love and trust?

But now that confession seemed imminent she was prepared to do all that was in her power to prevent it. Her pride and obstinacy, her long jealousy of Eleanor Marwood and her child, her love for her own son—these all rose up fiercely in protest. She could not bear the exposure—she could not bear to relinquish what she had sold her honor to win. She even felt anger against her husband. She almost flung Eddie's hand from her and began to pace the room, her white jeweled hands locked tightly together, her brow frowning, her eyes full of a fierce light.

For a few moments the young man stood looking at her, unconscious of the tumult of conflicting passions in her heart, thinking only that she was filled with grief for his father's sake.

(Continued on page nineteen.)

THIS WASHER MUST PAY FOR ITSELF.

A MAN tried to sell me a horse once. He said it was a fine horse and had nothing the matter with it. I wanted a fine horse. But, I didn't know anything about horses much. And I didn't know the man very well, either.

So I told him I wanted to try the horse for a month. He said "All right, but pay me first, and I'll give you back your money if the horse isn't all right."

Well, I didn't like that. I was afraid the horse wasn't "all right" and that I might have to whistle for my money if I once parted with it. So I didn't buy the horse although I wanted it badly. Now this set me thinking.

You see I make Washing Machines—the "1900 Gravity" Washer.

And I said to myself, lots of people may think about my Washing Machine as I thought about the horse, and about the man who owned it.

But I'd never know, because they wouldn't write and tell me. You see I sell my Washing Machines by mail. I have sold over half a million that way.

So, thought I, it is only fair enough to let people try my Washing Machines for a month, before they pay for them, just as I wanted to try the horse.

Now, I know what our "1900 Gravity" Washer will do. I know it will wash the clothes, without wearing or tearing them, in less than half the time they can be washed by any other machine.

I know it will wash a tub full of very dirty clothes in Six minutes. I know no other machine ever invented can do that, without wearing out the clothes.

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It just drives soapy water clear through the fibers of the clothes like the force pump might.

So, said I to myself, I will do with my "1900 Gravity" Washer what I wanted the man to do with the horse. Only I won't wait for people to ask. I'll offer first, and I'll make good the offer every time.

Let me send you a "1900 Gravity" washer on a month's free trial. I'll pay the freight out of my own pocket, and if you don't want the machine after you've used it a month, I'll take it back and pay the freight too. Surely that is fair enough, isn't it?

Doesn't it prove that the "1900 Gravity" Washer must be all that I say it is?

And you can pay me out of what it saves for you. It will save its whole cost in a few months, in wear and tear on the clothes alone. And then it will save 50 cts. to 75 cents a week over that in washwoman's wages. If you keep the machine after the month's trial, I'll let you pay for it out of what it saves you. If it saves you 60 cents a week, send me 50 cents a week till paid for. I'll take that cheerfully and I'll wait for my money until the machine itself earns the balance.

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The House of Fear;

Or, PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAN FROM CEYLON.

I WAS not deceived by the sudden change of front on the part of Doctor Dunlape and Teresa Hope in the House of Fear. It was too sudden to hoodwink me after what had passed under the roof of that accursed habitation.

Balked in my determination to go to the city by Brooks' abrupt departure, I was, perforce, obliged to remain where I was, the only person to stand between Rostan Gosnold and the pair of plotters. Flavia could be of little assistance to me, though I was aware that the tall maid would serve me well if occasion required.

What had become of Brooks I did not know. His wound could not have been so very serious; it must have been much less so than we thought, and now he was off on a mission which I could only hope would result successfully.

The next night after Brooks' going away a soft footfall came to my door and I admitted Flavia.

That the girl had something to communicate I saw at once, for her face was white, and she glanced anxiously around as she seated herself.

"Who is the person who has just come?" she inquired.

I shook my head. I had seen no one.

"What is the visitor like?" I asked, and Flavia looked strangely into my eyes.

"He is a little dark-eyed man with the funniest eyes you ever saw, Miss Alice."

"Is that all, Flavia? A funny little man with dark eyes? Your description is very limited."

"I know, but his face struck me most," said the maid, crossing and uncrossing her hands nervously. "He had a small black cap and when he was met in the lower hall by Teresa, he bowed like a person you see on the stage, and now he is upstairs with the doctor in his room."

My curiosity was greatly excited. Who could this new person be and why had he come to Shadow Farm?

The next morning, when I was halfway down the stair, I stopped suddenly, for the strange one had just emerged from the library. He answered Flavia's description precisely. I saw a smallish man, clad in gray clothes, with a short neck, a little head, and eyes that seemed to pierce one through and through. He had not perceived me, and he entered the parlor opposite the library without having seen me.

All at once there flashed across my mind a face I had seen but once, and that was years before. When I was little more than a girl, my father had a visitor in his laboratory, a man with whom he consulted long behind closed doors. I remember that when this singular-looking personage left the house, he looked me over from head to foot, made a low obeisance, and laughed till I saw his teeth glitter. It was all plain to me now. This same man had again crossed my path.

I went back to my room and tried to think. Father had told me the name of his visitor, but it was such a strange name that I had lost it in the vortex of the years.

I went to my dresser and hunted up several diaries I had brought to the House of Fear. I had packed them with my belongings, hardly knowing why I had preserved them, and now with the whole lot in my lap I went over them leaf by leaf.

All at once I paused, and a cry came to my lips. There was an entry that glared at me out of the lap of time, and I was reading it with bated breath.

This little man's name was Chamar Doaz. He was a Ceylonese, and I remembered shortly after his visit to my father's house I was told that he had come to trace the old sailor who had sold the poison of the nobi.

It was all clear now, and Chamar Doaz was in the House of Fear.

Of course he would not know me, and thus armed, I resolved not to avoid him.

When I went down to my duties in the library I found Rostan Gosnold in the best of humor. He was still on the road to health.

I was in the midst of a book when I became aware that I was being regarded from the door which was open. Without looking up I could have guessed who was there. I read on and on, but the influence of those mystic orbs were upon me. At last I raised my eyes and beheld just the person I expected to see.

There he stood in his suit of gray, watching me with those dark, mystifying orbs, never for a moment taking them from me and all the time wondering, as it seemed to me, what he should do.

I wondered if he had really recognized me.

There was little zest in my reading while he remained at the door, for those eyes had an influence which I could not break.

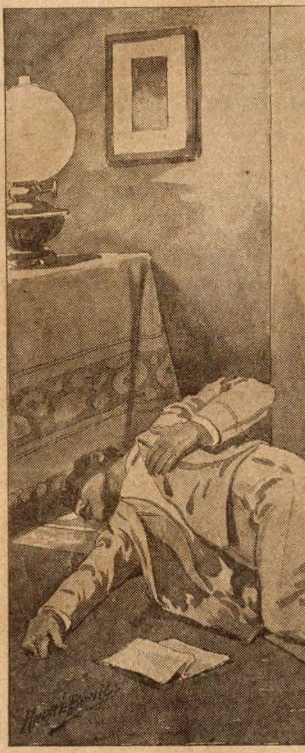
Rostan Gosnold evidently did not see him, for he leaned back in his chair with half-closed eyes, drinking in the story in the book, and I rattled through it as fast as possible.

That man had come to the house for a purpose.

"You have not met our guest?" said Teresa, whom I encountered in the hall. "The doctor has invited him to see Mr. Gosnold. M. Foquart is a foreigner and a man of medical lore. Of course you would like to meet him?"

I nodded and followed her into the parlor.

Chamar Doaz was reclining on one of the rich sofas with his eyes closed, but the moment he heard Teresa's footsteps he opened them and rose to his feet.



On the carpet lay a man.

That moment his gaze fell upon me, and I walked over to the light so that he might have a full view of me.

My name did not seem to startle him—I believed nothing could break his composure—and the next moment he went back to his seat and totally ignored me.

"He is a strange person," Teresa explained the moment we were out of the room. "He is a man of few words, but of great learning. I am quite sure he will help the master on the road to recovery."

I was not required to resume my task till just before Rostan Gosnold retired. I wanted a secluded place to think the whole matter over, and there was none better than the little pergola in the grove where Reginald had pieced out the torn paper I had found at the foot of the cliff.

I made my way quietly to the spot, taking with me a book, for the sun had warmed the air and the latest song-birds had returned to the almost leafless trees.

In the solitude of the arbor house I set myself to my task. It was a secluded spot, for vines covered the pergola and almost hid the narrow entrance.

I cannot tell how long I had been there before I heard footfalls among the leaves beyond the door. I must have fallen into a doze for I remember opening my eyes and rousing myself at the sounds.

The book which I had brought to the place had fallen at my feet. As I stooped to recover it I glanced toward the entrance, and my eyes fell upon the person who darkened it.

It was the Ceylonese, Charmar Doaz.

He looked at me from the depths of his malignant eyes, which suddenly changed color like the skin of a chameleon.

"Will you not come in?" I said with all the courage I could assume. "This is my favorite retreat."

He was inside before I had ceased to speak, but he did not take a seat.

"You have changed," said he, in his soft voice. "It has been a long time since we met."

That he should recognize me was now no surprise, for I felt that a person of his discernment never forgot a human face.

"I have blossomed from childhood to womanhood," I replied, with a smile. "I knew you the moment I saw you today."

He was rubbing his little hands and looking at me with a singular smile which had gathered at the corners of his mouth.

"I did not know who was here," he went on, edging forward while I maintained my seat with my gaze riveted upon him. "The doctor did not tell me."

"You came then at the doctor's invitation?"

"Yes."

"And you know Teresa also?"

His smile vanished at my question.

"You have changed your name, I see.

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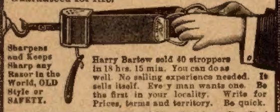

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Then you were Chamar Doaz, now you are M. Foquart."

He took a seat beside me and for a moment longer contented himself with looking into my face.

"What a memory you have, child!" said he. "Do you know why I am here?"

"Teresa says you have come to help the master on the road to health."

His next words sent a thrill through every fiber of my frame.

"No," said he, "I came to help kill."

I felt that I should start to my feet and utter a wild cry. He was as cool as a stoic.

"It is true. I came to kill, not to cure," he went on, laying one of his little hands in my lap. "I did not expect to find you here. Your father is dead? Yes. Do you remember the sailor who sold him the bottle of nobi?"

"Yes, yes!"

"The drug is in this house. But somehow or other it has failed to work."

His hand fumbled beneath the folds of his gray garment and he drew forth a phial which he held up to the light.

"I have the deadly agent here. Some other drug must be working against it in yon house. Tell me, child. Did your father ever discover an antidote for nobi?"

I looked straight into the dark face of Chamar Doaz.

"Yes," said I. "He found the antidote, and I have it with me."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHE WOLF'S TEETH.

For all this I could not trust this dark-faced, dark-eyed man from the island in the summer sea. If he had come to kill, then the plotters in the House of Fear had sent for him. He leaned toward me when I told him that the antidote for the nobi was in my possession. His slender hand stole forward and rested upon mine.

"He did discover it, then?" I heard him say. "Your father was a great man."

In another moment he was on his feet, looking down at me in wonderment.

"If you have come to kill, will you kill?" I asked with all the boldness I could assume.

He did not speak.

"The master of Shadow Farm has been good to me," I went on, rising. "He gave me a home when I was alone in the world. They have taken the ewe lamb from his bosom. They have taken Annabelle."

He did not seem to understand, for his look was an interrogation.

"You do not know. I forgot that you have but just arrived. You have come to kill!" and I turned away and looked out through the leaves where the autumn sunlight was flecking the ground.

I felt all my blood surging to my heart. I trembled to my finger tips.

"Why not?" he said in tones so low that they barely reached by ears. "Her father robbed my people of their world-wide poison. I must be Chamar Doaz whatever happens."

The next moment I felt a hand on my arm, and when I turned I saw the Cey-lonese looking into my eyes.

"Go!" said he. "Go and leave me alone."

It was a strange command, but I obeyed. In another second he was alone in the bower. I was almost running back to the House of Fear, leaving my book at his feet.

When I retired to my chamber that night, I found the volume lying on the floor at my door, and carrying it into the room, it opened in my hand and a bit of paper dropped out.

Picking it up, I carried it to the light and stared at the delicate tracery on its surface.

"Child of the Great Man," I read, "do not forget that I came to kill. But you can fight with a weapon as terrible as the nobi."

There was no signature to these words, and I hid the writing in my bosom.

The last mail had brought me a letter from Reginald, and this I read for the sixth time in the light of my lamp.

He really had found Madame Mantelli. He had crossed her threshold, but the woman had suspected him. This was bad for our plans. He wrote that she was a woman with an evil reputation, a sorceress, a creature versed in the black arts, and one who would not hesitate to commit any crime for gold.

Reginald further said that he had not despaired of tracing a connection between Madame Mantelli and the two plotters. He said nothing about Annabelle, and I knew that as yet he had not heard of her disappearance.

I sat down at once to write the whole story. I would put him on his guard, hoping, in addition, that Brooks would find him, and the two would work together.

It was not far to the little postoffice, and I knew that if my letter got off in the early morning mail it must be mailed yet that very night. I made ready to post the letter, and in a few moments was on my way through the grove.

The railroad postoffice was locked, but there was an outside letter-drop, and I was in the act of mailing my letter when my wrist was seized, and I drew back with a cry.

"Not that!" said a voice at my ear, and I turned to look into the face of Teresa Hope, white in the flare of the station light.

The letter was still gripped in my hand.

"You must not!" she continued. "You can remain at Shadow Farm, but you must not play spy."

My gorge rose in a flash. It was too much that this woman should seek to master me. I drew back the length of her arm and darted her a look of stern remonstrance.

"And what are you," I cried, "that you command me?"

Her face grew tigerish in the light.

With a sudden jerk into which I threw all my strength, I was free. Divining my intention she bounded forward, but she was too late for I had reached the drop and my letter had been intrusted to the postoffice authorities.

We were alone on the wind-blown platform. I knew that the postmaster would later on return to dispatch the night mail and that she dared not wait there and demand my letter.

"I could kill you!" she hissed at me with the ire of a rattlesnake. "I could throw you before the train which has just shrieked in the hollow yonder!"

My look was a savage dare.

"You have been a curse ever since you came to yon house," she went on. "You have meddled in everything. Your hand has been dipped into affairs which were none of yours."

I did not speak.

"It is all your fault," she continued. "But for you——"

Another piercing shriek of the iron monster drowned her voice, for it was almost upon us. I saw Teresa draw back and then the train thundered by.

"I could have thrown you under its wheels!" she cried. "I wish I had sacrificed you!"

"As you please," I answered, derisively. "You see you have missed your chance," and with this I started toward the steps.

I knew she would follow me. I heard her pattering steps behind me, but I did not look back. As I jumped to the ground I heard the swish of her hand and when I looked back I saw her figure in the light of the window and in that hand was something long and slender that sent out a gleam which curdled my blood.

Quick as a flash Teresa Hope came after me. I saw her clear the platform, and the next moment I was fleeing toward the House of Fear.

If she should overtake me, she would prove a better runner than myself. I knew every foot of the narrow path. And moreover, I had the lights of the house to guide me.

For a moment I did not hear the footfalls of my pursuer, but directly I caught them again, yet this only accelerated my speed. If I could reach the house I would be safe.

Over the path I went, looking not back, but ever ahead. I gained the lawn. I threw wide the front door, and paused in the hall for breath.

On the dim stairway I caught sight of a crouched form, and as I stared it moved and grew into Flavia's figure.

"Oh, Miss Alice!" I heard the girl cry as she threw herself forward. "They have had it out in the library."

She was gasping like one on the verge of hysterics. I seized her arm and tried to shake her into a semblance of reason.

"What has happened?" I cried, as I shook her. "Who have had it out in the library?"

"The doctor and the dark-faced man."

"Who is in there now?"

"I don't know. I dare not look. It was terrible, Miss Alice!" and Flavia tottered against the wall and shuddered again.

"I will see," I exclaimed. "Perhaps harm has come to the master."

"No, no! For God's sake, Miss Alice, don't go in there," wailed Flavia. "You don't know who is in the library. They quarreled like men in a rage——"

"And Rostan Gosnold, the master? Where was he?"

"I did not hear him. It was the two men, the doctor and the stranger."

Again I shook loose Flavia's grasp and turned to the library door, which was closed.

The pallid maid fell back and clasped her white hands shudderingly.

In another moment I had turned the knob and looked in.

A light was burning on the table, and I saw that a chair—the master's—was upset on the rug.

But that was not all I saw.

On the carpet, at the fringe of the Persian rug, lay a man face downward.

"Don't go in," I heard Flavia chatter, in her abject fear. "For the love of Heaven, Miss Alice——"

I did not heed the hysterical creature, but bounded forward and stood over the silent thing on the rich carpet.

It was not Doctor Dunlape; that I saw at a glance.

The upper part of the body lay in the shadow of the table, and I picked up the lamp and pulled it toward me.

"Come here," I said, in commanding tones, and Flavia pulled herself together and crept into the room.

"Hold the light, girl," I went on and she took it with more nerve than I thought she had left.

In another moment I had turned the body over, and the light fell upon the face of Chamar Doaz.

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"He is dead!" cried the tall maid.

"Yes," said I through set teeth, as I looked up, "and killed by the evil genius of this house!"

The maid set the lamp on the table and fled from the room with a cry.

CHAPTER XV.

I HAVE A MISHAP.

I was still stooping over the man on the floor when the door of the master's room was pulled ajar and upon looking I beheld the face of Rostan Gosnold full of innate fear and curiosity. He came forward after a moment's stare and stood beside me.

"What is all this, Miss Reynolds?" he asked.

I pointed down at the inanimate thing at my feet.

"Who is this man?" He got down upon his knees and gazed at the pallid features revealed by the soft rays of the night lamp.

"It is Chamar Doaz."

"I do not know him. How came he here?"

"I suspect that you will have to ask Doctor Dunlape."

His gaze wandered from the face of the dead back to me and he rose to his feet. He was about to touch the call-bell, when I heard the swish of skirts, and Teresa Hope was looking at us from the open door.

She did not come forward, but the same light which I had seen in her eyes when I left her at the station glittered there and boded me no good.

In another moment she was gone without a single word, and Rostan Gosnold and I were left alone with the dead.

"I must have been in a deep slumber," said the old man. "I heard no sounds and yet you look as though this man was killed."

"Flavia heard the quarrel," said I. "There is no mark on the body so far as I can see," and I began an inspection whilst my companion looked on in silence.

We were startled in a moment by the voice of Doctor Dunlape who came in hastily.

"He must have been a maniac," said he, addressing both of us. "I found him here in the library, and when I remonstrated, he turned upon me like the tiger he was."

I gazed into the face of the man who could coolly speak thus, and our eyes met. He must have felt that I put no credence in his assertion, that, in other words, I believed he was deliberately lying, for he suddenly shifted his gaze.

"Who is this man?" inquired Rostan Gosnold.

Forbes Dunlape shook his head.

"Who he is and whence he came is a mystery to me," he said. "He is a foreigner."

"Yes," said I, "a Ceylonese. It is Chamar Doaz."

"Then, why came he to Shadow Farm?" and the master's look increased in mystery.

Doctor Dunlape made no reply, but stooped over the dead man and coolly began to examine the body.

The deliberateness of this man seemed to freeze my blood. He was all method, and as I watched him, I remembered what Flavia said about the quarrel in that very room.

"He had a weak heart," said the doctor, rising. "I did not handle him roughly. He fell over the chair when I attempted to eject him; that's all."

Was this true? After all, was it not deliberate murder?"

"Take him away," commanded Rostan Gosnold. "I will send for Brooks. There need be no inquest, eh, doctor?"

"One is hardly necessary."

"Where is Brooks?"

The disappearance of the big fellow was as yet a secret, and I feared that the disclosure of it then and there would excite the suspicions of the man of evil.

Therefore I kept my tongue, and with another look at the master I turned and left the room.

On the floor above, waiting for me, I found Flavia, with her face still white and her hands clasped in an agony of fear.

The tall maid was more than half composed, despite her looks, and came toward me with a wan smile on her face.

"What did he say?" she asked, pausing before me.

"He breathed a lie," I cried, for I could not keep down my indignation. "He only pushed the man from him, and a weak heart did the rest!"

The girl laughed.

"It is a base lie, Miss Alice," she exclaimed. "I heard Doctor Dunlape say: 'You have proved a traitor. The woman has won you over, and you shall die.'"

I felt like escorting Flavia back to the library and facing Forbes Dunlape with the woman who could hurl his lie into his face, but I refrained.

Back in my room, I sat a long time in my chair thinking over the last terrible events in the House of Fear. Now, more than ever before, I knew that I was dealing with one of the coolest villains that ever drew the breath of life. I did not hear the naked branches which the night wind hurled against the house as if in mockery of my situation. At last I heard footsteps in the corridor, and I knew that Doctor Dunlape was closeted with Teresa.

What had become of the body of Chamar Doaz I did not know.

Presently I heard a knock on my door, and I rose and opened it.

The woman stood before me. I held the door open for her, and she came in and leaned gently against my bed.

I felt that the battle was about to open

There was a haughtiness about Teresa Hope that stung me to the quick.

"You must answer one question," said she, coolly, and her eyes looked me through. "To whom did you send that letter?"

If she had come to me for this purpose, she was likely to find a foe worthy of her steel.

I did not reply, but glued my lips together with deliberation, and gave her look for look

"Evasion will avail you nothing," she went on, thinking she commanded the situation. "You wrote to some one."

"Yes," said I, "to some one."

"But to whom?"

"You have had my only answer."

"You will not tell?"

"I deny your right to catechize me."

I saw the tiger nature that tugged at her heart leap into her eyes, and she moved one of her feet forward.

For a moment I thought she would fling herself upon me, but perhaps she saw me brace myself defensively.

"Never mind," she hissed in my face. "There is a way," and before I could resume my thoughts she was gone. The door had been slammed in my face, and I was again alone.

By and by I slipped from the room and went down the staircase.

The library was dark. I opened the door and looked in for half a minute, wondering if Chamar Doaz still occupied the place. The silence of death was about me, and I felt the fluttering of my woman's heart as I stood in the gloom trying to solve the mystery hidden by the pall of black.

All at once I heard some one on the stairs above me. I drew back against the wall and held my breath

Some one was coming down, and I stood there waiting for the next mystery of that dread habitation.

The unseen person halted at the foot of the flight. I could have reached forth and touched that one.

Presently I heard the library door open, and I knew that some one had slipped into the chamber.

The door had been left slightly ajar, and suddenly I caught the glimmer of a light. Then I moved forward and looked in.

Stooping over the rug at the side of the table, I beheld Doctor Dunlape, but his face was partly buried in shadow, and I watched him with all eyes

As the flare of the light grew brighter, I made out the human-like figure half doubled on the rug. Chamar Doaz was still within the house.

(Continued on page eighteen.)

THE CONFLICT OF LOVE AND FAT.

The average man will "jolly" with the stout girl; but he steals glances over her shoulder at that Miss Slender. He would sooner hold the hands of the latter in a fatuous silence than really enjoy himself with the other. Such is the power of line. Just a line—from chin to toe, or nape to heel—that's all. But it rings the merry marriage bell.

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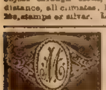

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painted by nature is the ideal beauty—it is what the artists try to copy and what users of rouge and cosmetics try to match.

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It is woman's happiness to look well and feel well—and every woman in good health has

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Impure skin, pimples, a muddy complexion, lustreless eyes and the many evidences of an impaired system can only be corrected by taking the necessary tonic.

By using Beecham's Pills the cause will be removed and the effects will soon be gone—vitality will soon be restored, the step regain its elasticity and the eyes will beam again with that same health which gives the countenance and complexion its best charm. The tint that tells of health will be

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Sold everywhere in boxes, 10c, and 25c; if your dealer should not have them, send price to Thomas Beecham, 365 Canal St., N. Y.

2 Full Gallons Straight Whiskey $2.87

Less Than Wholesale Price

This special offer must call for two gallons at $2.87 or one gallon trial offer $1.64.

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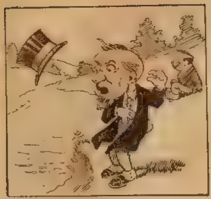
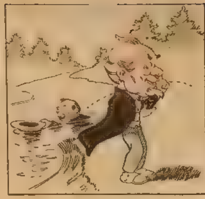
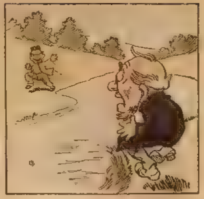


Old Tightwad—There goes my new $5 hat into the water!



"Well, well! That hobo thinks I'm going to reward him, but he'll see his mistake later



Hobo—Ta, ta, old boy! I kin use dis [illegible] in my business. Tanks!

Easily Answered.

"These kids I teach aren't a bit slow," observed a school teacher yesterday. "In fact, I'm afraid they read the papers. The other day I proposed the following problem to my arithmetic class:

"A rich man dies and leaves $1,000,000. One-fifth is to go to his wife, one-sixth to his son, one-seventh to his daughter, one-eighth to his brother, and the rest to foreign missions. What does each get?"

"'A lawyer,' said the littlest boy in the class, promptly.

A Mixture Composite.

"Jorkins is certainly in a good many positions at once."

"How so?"

"He is up in the air, down on his luck, on in years and back in his taxes."

Good Reason.

"How effusively sweet that Mrs. Blondey is to you, Jonesey," said Witherell. "What's up? Any tender little romance there?"

"No, indeed—why, that woman hates me," said Jonesey

"She doesn't show it," said Witherell.

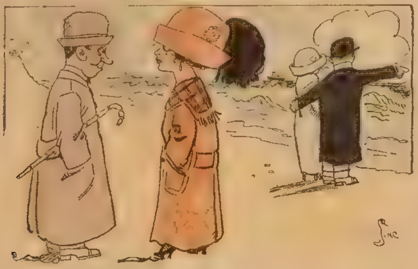
"No; but she knows I know how old she is—we were both born on the same day," said Jonesey "and she's afraid I'll tell somebody

A Utopian Spot.

Gibbs—I had a splendid time on my vacation this summer. Meals just when I wanted them' cold and warm baths, good service and no fees for waiters and porters.

Dibbs—Where did you go?

Gibbs—Nowhere; I stayed at home.



Ethel—Their parents made the match, I believe.
Arthur—I thought they opposed it?
Ethel—Yes, that's how they made it.

And Spreads Rapidly.

"I've given up telling my wife anything."

"So have I mine. It simply goes in at one ear and out at the other

"That isn't the trouble with my wife. It goes in at one ear and comes out at her mouth."

Run Short.

Old Friend How is your wife, Capt. Plowjogger?

The Captain (who has recently buried his fourth)—Wa'al, to tell the trewth, I'm kinder out of wives just now.

Just Once.

But Griggs thinks you are his best friend. If you lure him into making this hopeless investment he will never have anything more to do with you."

"That's all right. I've never expected to use him more than once"

Strange.

Wife—What's the matter, dear? Haven't they published your poem?

Poet—Oh, yes, that's all right; but they're actually selling the paper at a penny, as though there was nothing unusual in it.

No Fourth.

Senator Cummins, at a dinner in Des Moines, was talking about a Government contract that he deemed unfair

"This contract, if accepted," he said, "would work out like the farmer's crop

"A farmer, you know, leased a field to a farm laborer, and the rental was to be one-fourth of the crop raised

"Well, harvest time came in due course, but the farmer was amazed to find that he got nothing. The tenant hauled three loads of produce to his own barn, but there was nothing left for the farmer He, of course, remonstrated.

"'Here,' he said, 'how's this? Wasn't I to get a fourth of the crop?'

'Yes, sir, you was,' the tenant answered excitedly, 'but, hang it, there was only three loads, sir

Knew by the Signs.

"Your husband might have a little solid food directly he begins to mend," said the doctor

But how am I to tell?" inquired the anxious wife

The convalescent stages of influenza," replied the doctor, "are marked by slight irritability."

The next day he called and found the patient's wife radiant.

"When I refused to order his steak and onions," she explained, "he came into the kitchen and smashed fourteen soup plates and a dinner service; so, of course, I sent out for a steak at once"

Appropriate.

A young couple appeared not long ago in a prayer meeting in a middle Western town and requested the minister to marry them. The service was interrupted to oblige them, and after the ceremony they took a front seat while the regular meeting was resumed. A hymn was then given out that had evidently been selected with the incident in view.

Long Experience.

"I am quite surprised, Mr. Meeker, at your wife's knowledge of parliamentary law."

'She? Great Caesar! Hasn't she been speaker of the house for the last fifteen years?"

Ready for Emergencies.

"My husband has a terrible attack of grip."

"What are you doing for him?"

"Nothing. He has his life insured for six thousand dollars."

His Best Chance.

Gabber—You ought to meet Smith. Awfully clever imitator. He can take off anybody.

Tottie (wearily)—I wish he were here now

TICKLISH TACKLES

Styles in Disease.

"What seems to be your ailment?" inquired the fashionable physician

"I hardly know" answered the fashionable patient 'What is in vogue just now?"

Two Souls.

"Hallo, Jones! What are you doing in Boston?"

"On my honeymoon."

"Where's the bride?"

"Oh—er—she preferred Niagara"

Makes Difference

'Is [illegible] father of [illegible] girl across [illegible] room rich?

"I [illegible] know, wh[illegible] was just trying [illegible] make up my [illegible] to whether she is skinny [illegible] merely slen[illegible]."

Pass On.

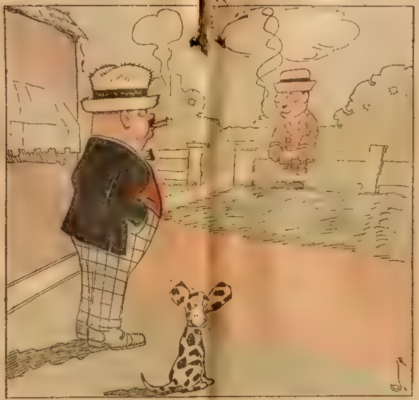
"I am seeking local color for an opera," said the traveler "Have you any merry villagers in this village?"

"Not in this village," answered the inhabitant. "All we have is a bunch of disgruntled taxpayers."

Mamma's Joke.

"Oh, mamma, the hen is sitting on the vacuum cleaner!

"Perhaps, she's only trying to lay the dust, dear."



Mr. Nexdoor—What a funny cut you have on your grass

Mr. Subbubs—It is odd. You see, my new hired man used to be a barber, so he left the front long enough to part and then lathered the back and shaved it

Refreshing Experience.

"What I'd like to see," said the reminiscent man, "is an old-fashioned one-ring circus."

"Well," replied Mr. Dustin Stax, "it's a pleasure to meet you. You are the only person I have encountered who complains that he is getting too much for his money."

The Flat Dweller's Inconveniences.

"Jiggers must be living in a very small flat."

"What makes you think so?"

"I saw him downtown yesterday looking for a folding toothbrush."

Something Just as Good.

Rural Cop—Hey, there, boy, yew can't fish around here without a permit.

Small Boy—Oh, I don't know. I'm gettin' along pretty well with this angleworm.

The Wise Tailor.

But look here, Snip," said Slowpay, "you haven't put any pockets in these trousers. What's the matter with you?"

"Why, Mr. Slowpay," replied the man of clothes, "I was going to suggest that in case you ever had anything to put into them you send it on to us to keep for you."

Sound advice isn't necessarily noisy.

Where the Profit Is.

Hewitt—Have you heard Gruet's creed?

Jewett—No

Hewitt—He says that he cares not who builds the airships of the country if he can only have charge of the funeral of the aviators

Husband Hunting.

"I've been looking for my husband for the last two hours," said an agitated woman to a calm one

"Don't be excited, madam," replied the latter; "I've been looking for a husband for the last twenty-five years.'

An Ingredient Lacking.

Mistress—Bridget, I told you twice to have muffins for breakfast. Have you no intellect?

Bridget—No mum; there's none in the house

Too Heavy.

"I say, you fellows," said Smith at the club, "you are supposed to be good at guessing. Tell me where the lightest men are to be found?"

The lightest men," ruminated Jones; "I should say the lightest men would be in Ireland, you know, men of Cork."

'Well, I would say Scotland," remarked Brown; "men of Ayr

Several guesses were made, but none right.

"I'll tell you," said Smith. "Although in Ireland there are men of Cork and in Scotland men of Ayr, in London—on the Thames—there are lightermen."

Smith still wonders why the club fellows did not laugh.

Not What He Meant.

The Doctor—Yes, madam, your husband's ears are quite seriously affected.

The Talkative Lady—Dear, dear!

The Doctor—And I beg of you, madam, to take personal pains to prevent his hearing from being subjected to any prolonged strain.

The Lady (brightly)—Oh, I know what you mean. I'll attend to it at once.

The Doctor—Attend to what, madam?

The Talkative Lady—Attend to getting a new automobile horn!

An Easier Destiny.

"I never feel sorry for a defeated candidate," said Farmer Corntossel

"You think he usually deserves what he gets?"

No. But I think a man's lucky to get off with fault-findin' and abuse durin' a campaign instid o' havin' to stand 'em through a whole term of office.'

Making It All Right.

Marks—I know your wife didn't like it because you took me home unexpectedly to dinner last night.

Parks—Nonsense! Why, you hadn't been gone two minutes before she remarked that she was glad it was no one else but you

You Noticed It?

The opening line said: "Deluded souls that look for Heaven."

"I never yet saw a man who talked like the hero of a story," said Mrs. Growcher

"Well," replied her husband, "I never saw a woman who looked like the pictures in a fashion magazine."

Rapid Communication.

"Think of the benighted days when they had no telegraph or telephone."

"Yes," replied the traveling orator, "and yet it must have been a comfort to make a speech in one town without feeling that you would have to stand for every word of it in the next '

The Ruling Passion.

"Why on earth did Nancy go out in that schooner when water trips always make her sick?"

"They offered to take her and her friend at half rates, and I suppose she could not resist the bargain sail

Wanted It Badly.

"Could you give me a raise, sir? You know I am married."

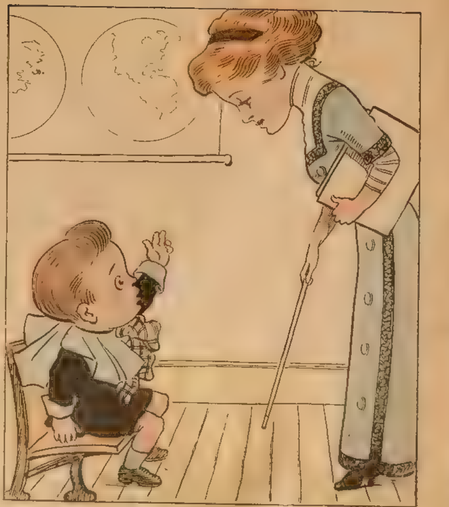
"But I gave you a raise so that you could be married."

"Yes, I know; but I find I need a raise more now than I did then."

The Cost of Learning.

"You'd think a girl's parents would want her to learn to cook before she married."

"Oh, I don't know. Why should they supply the raw material for her to practice on?"



NED'S MISTAKE.

"Sit here for the present ' the school mistress said.
As down in the front seat she put little Ned.
He sat for a while just as still as could be,
Then "When is dat pwesent a-comin'?" said he

Since He Asked.

Brown was in a terrible hurry to be at his club. He had been patiently sitting for a considerable time, and then getting exasperated, he poked the conductor in the ribs with his umbrella, saying: "Hi! Conductor, is this 'bus going on?"

'No, sir!" replied the conductor. "It is standing perfectly still

The Time of His Life.

"That life insurance agent gave me the time of my life.

"I don't see how you can say that; he didn't take you anywhere nor spend a penny on you."

No, but he told me how many years I might reasonably except to live"

Not Old Enough.

"You ought to refuse that rich man, he is too old for you

"I am going to refuse him. He is too young for me

"To young?'

'Sure; he might live twenty years yet."

A Domestic Secret.

"Why are the references presented by cooks so often unreliable?"

"I suppose," replied the timid housewife 'it's because we have to write them references in order to persuade them to leave peaceably'

Why It Hurt to Wait.

After having shipped fourteen gallons of Southpool sea, and having narrowly escaped colliding with the ironwork of a pier, Algy rested on his oars and gazed into the beautiful eyes of his companion.

"Darling," he cried recklessly, "I love you! Will you marry me?"

She dropped her eyes and gave a blush; then she replied in a fluttering, flustering voice'

"This is so sudden, Algy! Give me a little while to think it over."

"Certainly," he said, resuming his rowing landward, "But—er—do you mind if I give it to you on shore, dearest? This costs a dollar an hour'

An Unpleasant Vacation.

Gibbs—I wasn't going to take any vacation this summer, but the boss insisted

Dibbs—You don't say! How long a vacation do you get?

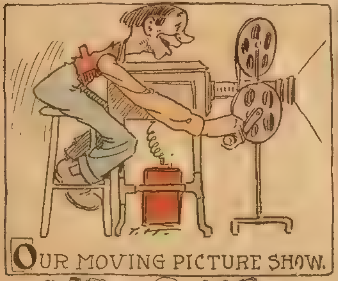
Gibbs—As long as it takes me to find another job.

His Trouble.

Hobo—I'd be glad to chop de wood, mum, but I'm too weak.

Lady—Nonsense! You look like a strong, healthy man.

Hobo—It's in me character, mum. I ain't got de iron resolution necessary for a job of work


OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW.

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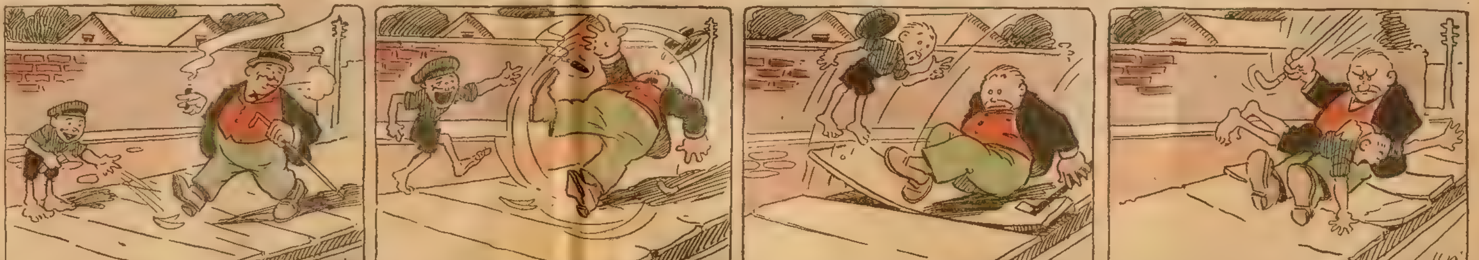

Bad Billy—Here is a bananner peel fer de gent——

To slip on! Haw-haw! How's [illegible] fer a——

"Nearthquake! Gee! He's busted through de sidewalk, and——

"Now I s'pose I'm it! Ow! Stop, mister an' I'll quit eatin' bananners all de rest of me life!"

THE STOLEN WHITE HOUSE;

Or, THE PRESIDENT'S RIVAL

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FATEFUL EVENING.

IT WAS the following evening, and Colgrave, carefully dressed, was about to leave his boarding-house. Brickley was at his side.

"Now," said the Texan, "the skirmish begins. Are you sure you can act your part well enough not to get arrested for suspicious loitering?"

"I've simply got to," answered Brickley doggedly.

"The very simplicity of your part makes it difficult."

"Not wishing to boast, I feel in my bones that I shall succeed."

"For the last time, run your instructions over."

"Brevity will answer, won't it. I hang around outside the White House, but of course, not within sight of it. My beat is the outlying streets, and I [illegible] not to show any interest in the [illegible]. At one point the coupe [illegible] with Peter as the driver [illegible] the [illegible], as if waiting for a person who is visiting somewhere. I am to keep an eye on the carriage, but not linger by it wholly. Above all things I am to have both ears open for the bir[illegible] you have taught me, and if I hear it—"

"It is to be hoped there will be no [illegible]."

"If I do I get the coupe in motion, and also prepare to fight by your side like an angry Texas jaguar."

"Right! Still," and here Colgrave grew thoughtful, "as you talk it off it seems tinged with an unwieldy element, and half theatrical. I couldn't see any substitute that would leave me with something to rely upon in an emergency."

"Frankly, my good employer, I hope that emergency will come. You fished me out of the river when I was labeled 'drowned,' and I owe you a debt of gratitude. I don't know of anything I can do better than fighting, and I hope a chance that way will come tonight."

"No, no!" Colgrave exclaimed. "Not that. In my border life I have seen a good bit of fighting that I could not avoid, but this is the city of Washington, and it isn't to be thought of for an instant. No fighting, for heaven's sake! Do you want to land in a police station?"

"Unless there is need, no. If you bid me risk it, yes."

The Texan looked critically at his companion. From the first he had seen that the man he had taken under his protection was wholly out of proportion with the seedy garments he then wore. Brickley was intelligent, straightforward, and pleasant of manner, and the claim against the Government that had taken him to Washington, and eventually left him stranded, was one that only a man of brains could have. All this was old, but his desire to repay his leader's kindness was forcibly presented that night.

"You and I understand each other, old fellow," Colgrave said genially. "We will talk it over later on. Now, I must be going."

"So must I, presently. Hadn't you better let me take a revolver with me, after all?"

"No. He who has a revolver may shoot, and he who shoots is pretty sure to get into trouble, hereabouts. My only weapon is my fists."

A few more words were exchanged, and Colgrave went out. Brickley smiled grimly and, slipping his hand into a pocket, brought forth a neat thirty-two caliber revolver.

"Sorry to go against my captain," he muttered, "but ballast is sometimes a good thing. Again, to carry on Colgrave's philosophy, he who shoots may run, and he who runs may sometimes escape. We'll see."

Meanwhile Colgrave was walking briskly, and he soon arrived at a fine house in a good quarter of the city. When he had rung and given his name he was promptly admitted, and the master of the house presently joined him in the parlor. That gentleman was then as conspicuous for his expensive but subdued garments as he always was for his position in social life in the city, and though not an office-holder, he was an intimate of the highest Government officials, who relied greatly upon his opinions. His name was Rythmore.

He nodded amiably to the caller.

"Glad to see you again, Mr. Clarke," he remarked. "As I've said before, this is the first time I ever gave the cover of my protection to a stranger under such circumstances, but I trust a good deal in your appearance, and implicitly in Miss Starwake."

"No man, sir," said Colgrave, [illegible] higher opinion of the sanctity of the White House than I."

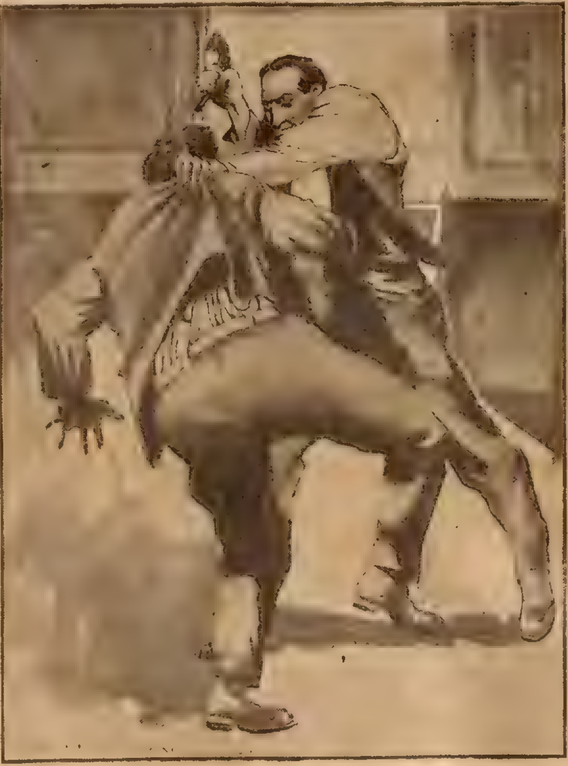
"You don't aspire to steal it, eh?"

The Texan's gaze grew suddenly keener, but Rythmore's whole manner established the fact that his words were a jest. Little did the man of influence suspect what ideas he awakened.

"If the White House has no more dangerous foe than I," Colgrave answered quickly, "it will be unmolested for its entire lifetime."

"I believe you. Now, we will go. I shall introduce you as my friend. It would," and Rythmore smiled dryly, "hardly be diplomatic dignity to state to the President and his advisers that you were there by Miss Starwake's desire. You know, of course, that you can not possibly enter the President's office."

Colgrave agreed, but he silently thanked the lucky chance that had made Marcia his ally. Without her help he would not have entered any of the presidential mansion that evening, which meant that she had supplied him with the proper setting for his expected work. After that all would depend upon himself.



Colgrave's clubbed revolver came down upon his head.

The two men drove to the White House grounds, where the carriage was dismissed. As they neared the entrance, Colgrave experienced brief trepidation. He was invading the seat of Government diplomacy, and his own personality seemed to shrink to nothing. Just then he regretted that he had not gone to the secret service officers with his story, but again came the belief that they would look upon it with derision, for it was as strange a case as the phantasies of a dream. In a moment his spirits took an upward flight, and he was glad he had no hypercritical officers to meddle with his work.

But how was he to do it alone

The question was staggering, but his mind was fairly easy and his face stoical as he entered the world-famous building that was to be stolen that night.

It was a time of high tension in the capital city. News was abundant, and in some instances, startling, but the chief problem was, as far as ordinary men knew, wrapped in utter darkness—where was the Spanish fleet? Theories were many, but guess-work would not save the United States coast from bombardment, nor bring the American warships in contact with the sea warriors of Castilian blood

It was the crisis in affairs that took numerous trusted men to the White House, and the national uncertainty that made the gayest of the party sober that night.

Keeping step with Rythmore, the Texan was conducted to a waitingroom where he found a score of other men. Neither then nor afterwards did he receive an explanation of the business of the well-meaning then present, though it was easy to surmise that some were there for consultation, and others to receive secret instructions.

Colgrave was running his glance over the men, thinking with satisfaction that he would have plenty of physical aid in case of need, though none in sudden strategy that might be unavoidable, when his gaze halted abruptly.

Adam Smith was there. Calm, thoughtful, as much master of himself as usual, and serene in his intercourse with those about him, the conspirator whose power, according to his allies, made him a rival of the President, was in the loyal circle where he was as much out of place as a rattlesnake.

Colgrave had been introduced to a few, but the occasion was too serious for anything elaborate, for which he was thankful. He feared lest Smith, having seen [illegible] night when with Marcia, would [illegible] him, and he took position well [illegible] tha astute man. Continuing [illegible], also, by turn, noted that Tripp, Ward and Jason Starwake were present.

A less resolute person would have wavered at the prospect. Before the young man were the plotters who would overturn the President's national work, and the kinsman who had attempted the Texan's life. It was dangerous company.

Conversation was fairly steady, though limited to groups, for which he was further thankful, and as scant attention was given to him, he soon found his courage soaring so high that he was obliged to place it in check to avoid [illegible]. It was useless to avoid the conspirators if he expected results, so he took a new tack. Slowly, quietly, and without drawing attention, he slipped around until he was close to Smith's back. That gentleman was talking easily to an exalted officer of state.

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"It will," he was saying, "not be easy for the Spanish admiral to cover his movements much longer. If his fleet is under steam he must reach somewhere, and that will be the hour for the United States to win a notable triumph!"

"Unless our own fleet is elsewhere."

"Trust our admiral for that," and Smith smiled wisely.

"Perhaps. Yet, to use a homely expression, the two fleets are now playing hide-and-seek in the Atlantic."

"Our game is wholly seek, sir, and we shall find."

"To find, we, on the land, must receive information as to where the Spaniards are, and then send information to the warships——"

"Information will be sent!" asserted Smith.

"When?" asked the state officer, with the wisdom of one close to the Presidential chair.

"Very soon, perhaps."

"My good sir, I did not think you one to let your wishes father your thoughts. We are in darkness. Query: Where are the Spaniards? The ocean is broad. Where, on its wide bosom, is the hostile fleet we wish to locate? The President must know before he can give orders to our admiral. Your loyalty jogs your judgment a trifle too hard."

"That may be so," Smith admitted, more prudently.

The state officer moved away smiling, while Smith looked after him with an inscrutable face. Colgrave could have sworn that the master conspirator was laughing inwardly, but he betrayed nothing. Satisfied of his power he waited for the great stroke of his scheming career.

The Texan's blood seemed to have taken on a fever-leap. He barely checked an impulse to move after the officer of state and try to pour his story into loyal ears, but it occurred to him that, instead of averting a national calamity, he would speedily be under arrest as a madman, and probably thrust into a cell under suspicion of having designs upon the President's life.

The time was gone to seek help.

Just then Cartley appeared in the room, his face toward the President's office. He was not looking well, for a haggard shadow was in his face, and Colgrave believed it possible that the weight of his sins was heavy, too heavy, perhaps, for sleep and peace of mind.

Nevertheless, the man bore himself with a degree of composure, and Smith seemed to draw his attention magnetically. Cartley gazed, opened his lips without speaking, and then carried a hand to the breast of his coat, upon which he tapped lightly. Smith gave the slightest of nods and the younger conspirator disappeared into the adjoining room.

That touch upon his coat had meaning for more than Smith. It flashed upon the Texan that something was there of which both knew. What should be there, unless it was a paper? And what was the paper?

Colgrave's memory carried him back to the night aboard the Cormorant when Smith had asserted, talking with the select circle of his aids, that the President would unknowingly sign an order which would send the American fleet far away from outlying waters, and that would mean that the Spaniards would have clear sea-room to move to the American coast and bombard its cities.

The Texan believed that the treacherous act was near consummation, and that Cartley was carrying the document for the signature. And Colgrave could by no means enter to prevent the calamity.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GREAT STROKE.

The turning point of the conspiracy began to be clear to Colgrave. When Smith talked about stealing the White House he had been emphatic in affirming that nothing like a raid was contemplated, and subsequent events told their own tale. Unless he erred greatly, to steal the presidential mansion meant to reign there for a time, an hour or perhaps less than five minutes, as absolute master of the events of the nation.

Figuratively, if the President could be led by them to sign a damaging paper, unknowingly, it might be said that his foes had stolen the executive building.

Colgrave was in a further fever of anxiety. As he could not enter the chief magistrate's presence without a prolonged discussion that might approximate a disturbance, how was he to prevent the signing?

Occasionally the men near the President had passed with papers in their hands, and as Colgrave sought for his way he remembered this and caught the idea. Now and then, previously, the outsiders who waited had produced pencil and paper and either written or figured, and something of the sort from the Texan was likely to pass unheeded, he thought.

Remembering that he had paper in his pocket he produced it, finding it a sheet of letter size, and hurriedly wrote these words upon it:

"The President will tonight find it vitally necessary for him to carefully scrutinize all documents he signs, lest what he signs prove to be a hostile substitute."

When this was folded Colgrave waited, but the delay was brief. A young man appeared as others had appeared, carrying several papers in his hand. He was a little short of the opposite door when his arm was lightly touched and the Texan's voice sounded quietly in his ears.

"Pardon me, sir, but you have dropped a paper."

The messenger paused, glanced downward, saw a well-folded sheet and flushed deeply. Embarrassed at what he believed to be his carelessness, he stooped quickly, whipped up the sheet, and slid it into his hand with what else was there.

"Thank you heartily!" he exclaimed.

In another moment he had passed the door, on his way to the President, and as Colgrave's swift glance failed to note that the episode had been witnessed by any outsider he was beginning to breathe freer, trusting that those who served the nation's leader in loyalty would soon be warned by his written words, when he was startled to find Adam Smith by his side. The conspirator was easily, apparently naturally, calm, but his eyes held a masterful gleam that timid persons would not have welcomed.

"Foreign or domestic service?" he questioned, composedly.

Maybe he expected to see a cringing companion at his side, but the man who had locked horns with white and red desperadoes on the Southwest border for years, and mixed in with that experience occasional brushes with hungry jaguars and rattlesnakes that coveted share in his blankets, did not shrink or waver either of body or eye.

"I fail to understand, sir," he returned.

"Office seeker, I take it," pursued Smith evenly.

"Possibly. And then?"

"At this hour application is irregular."

"Thank you for the information."

"Had you placed the paper before me, perhaps I might have OK'd it."

"You are very kind, sir."

"Hardly that," continued Smith, "but I have felt an interest in you ever since the night when you were escorting a lady, and devoting your energies to finding a certain belt-bag. From that I assume you would be an ornament to the diplomatic service."

"Your commendation is appreciated."

Colgrave was thoroughly himself. He realized that, careful as he had tried to be, the always-keen eyes of the conspirator had observed his device as to the paper, which appeared to be a great misfortune. He knew, too, that Smith, confident of his superior mental ability, had advanced to his side to turn him inside out, while it was an unchallengeable fact that the experiment had failed.

The younger man, exposed to verbal fire, had neither flushed nor faltered, and his gaze was as steady and calm as that of the President's rival. He suspected, too, that he was more composed, inwardly, than Mr. Smith. The latter had seen an unusual performance with a paper, and when he tried to manipulate its sender he had not been able to fluster or irritate him.

The victory was with Colgrave, though partly because Smith was now himself working in the dark.

The conspirator continued conversation for a couple of minutes, and all the while he studied his companion's face closely, and half like one perplexed, but he knew when to admit defeat, and he finally moved away. Then, for the first time, Colgrave grew uneasy.

What would Smith do next? He had seen the paper go onward. The leading question was whether he would regard the Texan as too small a figure to be mixed up in national schemes, or give him credit for what he really was and strike back promptly and dangerously.

Perhaps ten minutes more elapsed, and then a man he had not before seen appeared at his side. He spoke, and the words drifted to Colgrave in the low tone that is more secret than a whisper.

"You see the door to your left. If you would serve the President additionally, pass through and you will find a friend there. Be quiet!"

Before reply could be made he had mixed with the crowd, and Colgrave was hardly able to say which of the total there present had addressed him. He had, however, received instructions, and he intended to follow them, though not with blind confidence. He credited Smith with ability to lay a trap for him, even in the White House.

Presently he moved slowly toward the indicated door, opened it and passed through, closing the way behind him. The late bearer of papers was there, embarrassed but eager.

"The call is from up higher," he explained, "but it would clear my mind if you would say definitely whether I did drop any document."

"You dropped none, sir," replied Colgrave promptly.

"Good! Then I am not open to blame. Now, pray follow me, for you are to see the President. Your note was presented to him much to his surprise, and a moment later, something—I don't know what—was laid before him for his signature. He did not sign, but read, and then there was a disturbance. You are wanted to——"

A third man appeared from the quarter which, Colgrave knew, must lead to the President's office, his manner excited and his eyes flashing with combined emotions.

"Has Cartley been here?" he hurriedly demanded.

"No," said the previous speaker.

"Certain he has not passed through since you reached here?"

"Sure!"

"He has been asked for and not found."

"Excuse me for interrupting," said Colgrave, curtly, "but if Mr. Cartley is not where he is wanted, I would suggest that he be placed where you do want him. There is reason for it."

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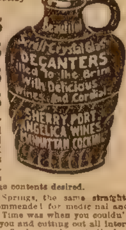
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"I am afraid he has slipped out."

"Then slip out after him. Yes, and let me go with you."

"Sorry, but orders are to bring you straight to the President, and I am not the man to go contrary."

"I'll bear the blame."

"That's where you are mistaken; the salaried man will bear it, and that happens to be me for one. Orders must be obeyed."

Colgrave barely suppressed his temper. If Cartley was really gone from the White House, it meant something, and as he might have taken state documents with him, the sooner he was run down the better. But red tape checked prompt pursuit.

"You've got the President's ear," pursued the last speaker, hurriedly. "Come with me and settle it with my superiors."

Colgrave went, and the next ten minutes saw a rapid conversation in which he had the chief part. Although not directly informed to that effect, he practically learned that his note of warning had been received and read, and that, immediately after, Cartley placed before the President what he stated was the orders to the Atlantic fleet. Really, it was a forgery, but made to resemble the genuine, and so nearly that, if not reread, it might have been signed but for the few lines the Texan had written.

And the forgery commanded the Admiral to take his fleet to the waters off the coast of Louisiana, whereas the original said to Cuba.

Colgrave, asked for his story, had omitted all details and given only a few of the most important facts, so he wasted no time, and now had to deal with those as energetic as himself.

Once, as the President listened, he had spoken in an aside to an assistant, and that man was soon back

"Mr. Smith," he reported, "is no longer in the waitingroom, nor do I see him elsewhere."

"Sir," interrupted the Texan, "if I may be so free, it is clear that both he and Cartley are trying to make their escape."

He was answered by a friendly nod, and in the next minute various orders were swiftly given, and the secret service of the country put in action. Men went forth, their idea being, most especially, to watch outgoing trains. Knowing this, Colgrave ventured another suggestion.

"Adam Smith," he said, "is not the man to seek escape by aid of the impulse of the moment. I admit the ability of the officers, and would not think of competing with them, but I have an idea of my own. Sir, it would please me greatly to try it. In an arm of the Potomac lies an old, abandoned schooner known as the Cormorant. I have not before mentioned it, for time seemed precious, but the conspirators have made it their quarters. I ask your permission, sir, to look there."

As swiftly as before the project was put into action. Colgrave left the White House accompanied by two officers, and in a short time he had located Brickley and the coupe. One of the officers had lagged to question a policeman, and he now came running.

"I have reason to believe," he said, "that Smith and Cartley went this way in a carriage. We have only to follow them——"

He had pointed, and his companion moved quickly.

"Into the coupe!" he directed. "We can run them down."

"Wait!" directed Colgrave, calmly but incisively. "I venture to say we shall never catch anybody by going that way. They have all of ten minutes' start of us, and even if we could trace them through yonder streets, the start would defeat us. Enter gentlemen, and let me direct our driver."

"Where should we drive if not after the fugitives?" exclaimed the officer sharply.

"Were not your orders to follow my lead wherever I said?"

"Fact, by thunder! I yield the point. Our success or failure, whichever we achieve, will be chalked up to you. Excuse my rebellion. We are at your service, sir."

Colgrave answered, and then he and Brickley, with the officers, were soon in the carriage. The driver had his orders, and they started briskly on their course toward the Cormorant. Going, the Texan occasionally wavered in his confidence in his own theories. Why should men who had plotted to steal the White House and misuse the destinies of the United States, finding themselves baffled and in great peril, flee to the Potomac and hide in a ruined schooner?

His judgment told him that his idea was absurd, but after that period of doubt came the old belief that the Cormorant was more than a place of meeting for the conspirators.

Colgrave's driver was no laggard at the reins, and they were taken along at a lively clip until the greater part of the journey was finished, but there was an interruption to their speed. As a street corner was turned, a wheel left its axle, the body of the coupe dropped, and they were one and all flung forward in inglorious wreck, far short of the schooner.

CHAPTER XX
THE FINAL BLOW.

The four men had been piled together in confusion, but Colgrave, finding that he had no perceptible injuries, flung the coupe door open and leaped out. The driver was struggling with his frightened horses, but the prompt aid of the Texan quickly reduced them to submission. By that time all were out and engaged in investigation.

The cause of the accident was not fully clear, but the results were only too evident. The refractory wheel had gone to pieces, the rim being broken at one point and two spokes wrenched from the hub.

"Total wreck!" commented an officer. "What are we to do now? No other carriage visible that we can requisition, and no livery stable at hand. We might raid a private barn and——"

"Too long a task!" replied Colgrave, briskly. "Our legs will take us to the river quicker than any other conveyance. Come!"

He set off, and as the driver tied his horses to a lamp-post and followed as eagerly as anybody else, the five men were soon trailing each other. The officers were heavily-built men who were no longer young, and they steadily fell backward in the race, while the others briefly kept together.

"Good exercise!" quoth Brickley buoyantly.

"Will you say that if we prove to be chasing a myth?" demanded Colgrave, half-irritably.

"It will be no myth!" exclaimed the driver. "We shall find somebody on board the schooner, and I reckon it will be Smith, for one."

"You ought to know best of all, Olland," the Texan admitted.

The word last spoken was no figment of the speaker's brain. Mary Olland's father, no longer missing, was the third man who ran that night.

After the race had continued a few blocks, the original leaders began to string out. Olland went with the energy of one who had been deeply wronged, and kept pace with the active borderman, but Brickley had been a winner of medals in foot-races before then, and he flung ahead almost like a floating shadow. Before the Texan sighted the river, his comrade had disappeared beyond the rising [illegible].

Then Colgrave, himself, finally had the Potomac under view. The night was fairly clear, though a slight mist lay over the water, rendering objects dim at a certain distance. Looking, however, he believed he could see the very point where the Cormorant had last been.

"Where is the schooner?" he cried, excitedly.

"Why—why ——." Thus far Olland spoke, and then his voice died away. Both were gazing outward, and neither saw anything.

"It has disappeared. Or do our eyes deceive us? How could it get off that sandbar, or rock, or whatever it was on?"

"I'm no sailor, sir, but I've always doubted that things were that way. A sandbar would not hold it for years, and as for a rock—why did that vessel occasionally lift as it did?"

"I now remember that motion. Can it have been anchored to a submerged rock? If so the anchor has been cast off and the Cormorant is gone."

"The delay has done for us!" groaned Olland. "Hang that defective coupe wheel!"

"If she has gone adrift, she is either floating down-stream or has already sunk to the bottom. Could she keep afloat?"

"I'm neither carpenter nor sailor, but when I've been over her I have suspected that her hull had been kept tight up to her natural line, and once there was a foreign-looking man aboard for an hour to do some mysterious hammering——"

"You are sure," interrupted Colgrave, "that we have the right point, and that she is gone?"

"Absolutely sure, sir."

"Come with me!"

The Texan ran down-stream, all the while eyeing the river keenly. As he went, that distant dimness shrank away, and was succeeded by clear water, and they had gone less than two hundred yards when a grim shape with a single leaning mast was made out adrift.

"The Cormorant!" exclaimed Olland.

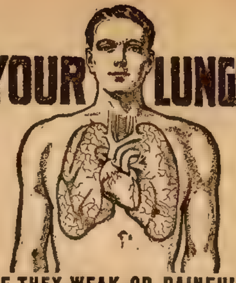
Colgrave said nothing. Flinging off his coat, he plunged in and began swimming with vigor and speed. He knew that Olland was behind him, but he gave heed only to the front. He was nearing the schooner, and his attention could not be too keen.

From the start he had tried to sweep her deck fully, anxious to know if anybody was there, but it was a dark expanse, and he could tell but little. He was within a few fathoms when the silence that had previously been complete was abruptly broken.

Cries that were a curious medley of the angry and vociferous rose in rapid succession, but muffled as if below decks.

The Texan remembered that Brickley had gone ahead, and as he was not a man to shrink from any danger, the probability seemed strong that he was in the schooner and beset by the conspirators. Colgrave drove at the water so furiously that he cut his way fishlike, and then he had his grasp on the hull.

At that moment a sailor would have read much in the way of the vessel. She was so low in the water that her rail



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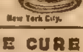

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threatened submersion, and as she drifted she lurched uneasily and sent forth gurglings and groanings that were eloquent. She had taken to her natural element in old age, but was wholly unfit for what she had once probably done well.

All this was lost upon Colgrave. As soon as he gained the deck, he discovered that no person was visible there, but the yells, which continued, were as wild and discordant as ever. Except for a ray of light in the modern passage at the foot of the companionway, all was dark there, but revolver in hand, he plunged recklessly down.

He fully expected that view of the cabin would reveal some of the conspirators, but what he did see, though thrilling, was less important. Brickley was in a desperate grapple with a man, who undoubtedly was the new watchman. The latter sent forth an odor of strong drink, and this or something else had brought him into a condition practically maniacal. He was besetting Brickley furiously, and though that young man was doing his part bravely, it was going ill with him.

It was the watchman who saw Colgrave first, and he became suddenly endowed with new powers for mischief. He swiftly drove his adversary back, and as Brickley's head crashed against the bulkhead he dropped his hands and hung limp.

It was the madman's last stroke, just then, for before he could turn, Colgrave's clubbed revolver came down upon his head, and he, too, had more than he could endure with equanimity. He staggered away, holding his beaten head.

At that moment Peter Olland appeared. His face bore a frightened look, and he glanced about him nervously.

"We must get out of this schooner!" he said in a husky whisper. "Can't you see, sir, she is sinking? She almost dips her rail, and even a landsman can guess what this lurching, staggering and gurgling means. If the hull was ever tight, of late, she has been scuttled—there!"

It was almost as if the hulk had suddenly lost way, but the after part rose and the forward sank until the deck tilted to a sharp angle. Colgrave gave quick thought

"Brickley is unconscious," he replied, "and our first duty is with him. I'll get him into the water and leave you to care for him, but I am coming back here. I want use of every minute she will float. Lift!"

They picked Brickley up and conveyed him hastily to the deck.

"Her bows are under!" exclaimed Olland. "She's going down now. Quick, quick!"

With the outlying water so high it was easy to handle the insensible man. They passed him over the rail, and themselves followed.

"Can you carry him ashore?" Colgrave asked.

"Do you really mean that you will——"

"I'm going back!" stubbornly replied the Texan. "I know there is more than wood in that craft, and I'm going to——"

"I doubt it," said Peter. "See!"

The forward part of the doomed schooner sank deeper and the water sounded a note as if it groaned in sympathy. Then the Cormorant took her last, death-like plunge and settled fully. A few seconds later the river was flowing peacefully above her, and only the warped upstanding mast told the place of her grave.

"Good riddance!" said Peter grimly.

"Not as I look at it," retorted Colgrave. "I wanted to see her interior fully, and the chance has gone forever. I can't imagine what made her sink so quickly."

"Ignorant as I am of such things, I've had some reason to think there was a device—done by carpenters since the gang had quarters here—so that a great gap could be opened near the keelson, by which she could literally be flooded when desired. That must be it, and the water must have come in by the barrelful."

"Probably you are right. To shore! Keep Brickley's head above water, and I will do the supporting of him. Now, swim!"

They acted in unison, and soon drew near the land. They were a few fathoms distant when a muffled roar broke upon their ears, the river rocked about them, and then came a ponderous splashing. Nor did it end at that. The usually sluggish stream resolved itself into waves that beat against them and leaped animal-like at the land for a time, after which it gradually died away.

"An explosion!" said Olland, wonderingly.

"The Cormorant has blown up!"

"What!"

"Fact! The explosion was under water, and what else could go that way? I reckon we were not out of the schooner any too soon."

"What about that drunken watchman—my successor?"

"I saw him slip away over the other rail, so he is safe somewhere——"

Brickley's head moved abruptly on Peter's arm.

"Where's Smith?" he demanded, his speech crisp for an invalid.

"Exactly what I want to know," replied the Texan.

"He was in the schooner. The watchman, in whisky-madness, had fastened him into the hold. He was shouting for liberty when I first arrived there, and I not only believed that I recognized his voice, but the watchman, full of the malice of drink, called him Smith several times, taunting him. I heard nothing after the fight began, and I guess Smith thought friends of his had come to his aid."

"Smith in the schooner?" repeated Colgrave blankly.

"Absolutely sure."

"Then he is a dead man now. If the explosion did not kill him, it would only leave him to drown."

"I thought I heard an explosion, but I was only getting my senses back and was not sure——"

Brickley said more, but Colgrave did not hear him. He was trying to realize what the case would be without Adam Smith to head the now-baffled conspirators. Presently he heard Olland say something about leaving the river, and he paddled mechanically until land was reached. The two officers were there.

"You outraced us," said one. "When we arrived we couldn't find the schooner nor you. What blew up?"

Colgrave bestirred himself and casting off meditation, made answer.

"A library with a history of all the conspirators of ancient and modern times. It's name was Adam Smith!"

The reply was incomprehensible to the officers, but he who had made it, recalling the President's rival, and remembering how he had towered as a masterful, dominating figure, saw no reason to recast his extemporaneous form of speech.

The next day Colgrave sat with a naval officer of high repute and long experience with ships of various kinds.

"All large craft," he said, "are naturally full of nooks and corners, and a ship carpenter can, at any time, construct hiding-places no landsman would possibly find. From early days it has been common for smugglers and others to fashion recesses in what looked like solid timbers, as, for instance, the keelson, sister keelson and keelson rider, all of which are companion timbers; and there jewels and laces and silks can be hidden. In some such recess, recently made, I suspect, Smith probably had papers, but they, as well as the infernal machine that caused the explosion, were too well secreted for your landsman eyes to detect."

"Did Smith not err in using the schooner, instead of a house?" Colgrave asked. "Was it not a clumsy place for all this?"

"I think not. The place was likely to pass unthought of by outsiders; and we know it did so pass. Also, it permitted swift destruction when necessary, with its secrets. Had the watchman kept sober, and had you not been pursuing the man, he would practically have annihilated his vessel and left no trace. I call his quarters a stroke of crafty forethought."

"How did he get her afloat so readily?"

"She was doubtless made fast to a

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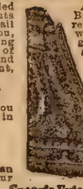

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hidden rock by a metal cable that could be readily cast off by one man, and he did it. He also opened the way for water to enter, and set the rapid-action infernal machine. Only that his watchman was a rum-crazed maniac, he would have left quickly and taken to flight. Yes, and judging from what I hear, I think he would have gone scot free, too. I can hardly conceive of such a man getting captured by officers."

"Will anything be found in the wreck, when divers go down?"

"Wood and metal. Papers? No! Smith's body? In part."

That prediction was fully established in time.

The jaws of the Government trap closed, and only Smith, dead, and Cartley, living, escaped. The latter disappeared successfully. The Texan never knew the exact course of Government action, but Jason Starwake and his fellow plotters were given opportunity to leave the country forever, and they went. There was ground for belief that if the papers supposed to have been secreted in the Cormorant had been secured, to make prosecution more promising, there would have been such action, and consequently, the public notoriety was largely avoided.

Neither did Colgrave ever know the foundation of Smith's daring aims, nor the identity of the persons, who, according to his claim, were to pay him immense sums of money to cripple American war measures, but when certain foreign men who were well known in diplomatic circles quietly left the country there was an impression in some quarters that they had been politely informed that their absence would be agreeable to the Government leaders.

It was not made a secret from the Texan, that, for months, efforts were made by the most skilful of the secret service officers to ascertain Adam Smith's past career, but nothing came of it. Even his nationality remained a mystery.

The Olland family were reunited, and Colgrave took care that Peter was so placed that poverty no longer menaced them. Peter, after being taken from the Cormorant by his enraged employers, had been confined in an old house, but he managed to escape and take part in the final events.

Brickley's claim against the Government was placed in the hands of a reputable lawyer and carried forward to a successful issue. The result placed him in good financial circumstances, and within a year he celebrated his new fortunes by marrying Mary Olland.

Colgrave had no difficulty in obtaining his share of the property left by Simon Starwake. Further than that, he found himself acquainted with many high officers of state, and respected as the man who had preserved the country from disaster, he entered upon his residence in Washington under most favorable conditions. He, however, with characteristic modesty, gave due credit to his aids, all of whom he had met under singular circumstances, and who had stood by him loyally when needed. In helping Marcia, Brickley, and Mary, he had given himself a bulwark for a time of need.

Marcia lost little by ending her career as Jason Starwake's adopted daughter, for she had warm friends, and after some months she became Colgrave's wife. She is proud of the fact that her husband did so much for the President, the White House, and his country, while both are as one in admiration for the presidential mansion. It had part in their early fortunes, and it remains as unshaken as if no conspirators had ever attempted to steal it.

The end.

* * *

The House of Fear.

(Continued from page eleven.)

Suddenly Forbes Dunlape put his arms beneath the body and lifted it from the floor. I saw him drop the match to the carpet, where it went out, and then a heavy footfall came toward the hall.

Once more I drew aloof, and heard Doctor Dunlape with his ghastly burden pass me in the dark.

A gust of cool night air struck my face as the front door was opened, and I heard the man of evil pass out upon the porch, where he must have descended to the lawn below.

For several moments I stood there debating what to do, when I again caught the sound of footsteps on the stair.

"Teresa!" said I to myself.

Something brushed by me in the gloom, the door was opened once more, and I was alone again.

Outside the night was starlit. The gemmed heavens were a dome of beauty, and once beyond the trees I knew that objects would be fairly discernible.

I did not wait for a head covering, but darted from the house and sprang from the porch, determined to see the end of this new act in the startling drama of the House of Fear.

Beyond the trees I caught the faintest glimpse of moving figures, but all at once my foot caught on an obstruction, and I plunged headlong to the ground. When I attempted to rise, I discovered that I had wrenched an ankle, and the pain was so intense that I was on the fringe of a swoon.

I had failed. If the noise of my fall had reached the ears of the plotting pair, they would be on their guard; therefore, biting my lip vexatiously over my mishap, I struggled back to the house, and limped painfully to my chamber.

This powerful story will be concluded in the next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

Slain on the Stage.

(Continued from page four.)

gether," returned Phil bluntly. "If I hadn't known you as Miss Annabelle Wesson, the actress, I might be tempted to think you only a common snake charmer from some dime museum."

"Don't be sarcastic, please. Sweetie might bite!" Then as cooingly as before: "You appear to know my name?"

"I saw you on the stage at rehearsal at the Thespis tonight."

The soubrette's eyes flashed meaningly. "So, you're one of the two new 'supers.' Got on to play detective, eh?"

"You've guessed right the very first time," declared the reporter boldly. Something in this woman's demeanor was instinctively revolting to him. He found it easy to think and to speak harshly.

"And what did you want to see Mr Hawkins about? Quiet, quiet, Sweetie; it's not time to bite the gentleman yet." The snake was again showing signs of uneasiness. She extended her hand to caress softly it's long, glistening neck.

"I'll explain that all to Mr. Hawkins when I see him," the Star man replied brusquely

"Humph! Just like all those inconsiderate reporters. No one is wrong in refusing to recognize them as gentlemen.'

Smarting at her thrust, Phil moved another pace to a position where he could look down directly into the rapt face of the actress. Then he blurted out harshly: "But I have one or two things to see you about, also, Miss Wesson."

"Me?" she inquired quickly, lifting her eyes for an instant from the snake to the stern countenance of the reporter.

"Yes, you."

"What, pray? And whatever it is, be sure to get it into the columns of the Star in the morning," she snapped, with an angry glitter.

"It will be there, all right—and in a way that you probably won't like!"

"Quiet, quiet, Sweetie," she hummed as the snake again quivered nervously. "It's not time to bite the visitor yet, although he does seem to deserve it." Then to the reporter: "Go on, what is it?"

"I want an explanation, Miss Annabelle Wesson," he demanded, slowly and impressively, "of your conduct with Miss Carringford just as you left the stage when the show broke up last night."

The soubrette's hand dropped from the neck of the serpent and gripped the edge of the table. The inquisitor felt that his demand had struck fire.

"My conduct with Miss Carringford?" she repeated in feigned surprise. "You puzzle me. I have nothing to do with her. She and I are not—well, we are not friends."

"That's no news," blurted Phil. "But you called her ill last night, and dragged her off the stage. Why?"

"Why? Why?" returned the actress, plainly nonplused. "You're mistaken. Hazel and I barely speak."

"Come, come, now," insisted Phil; "an end to this bush-beating. You caught her arm just as you left the stage and hurried her away. Your answer is important, for within a few moments thereafter Minna Gorsden was murdered."

The reporter plainly saw the woman's face flinch. He vowed to himself that he would get the explanation from her, even though he had to wring both the neck of her slimy pet and her own.

"So she's been talking to you, has she—the fool?"

"Explain your conduct," persisted the Star man, refusing to pay heed to her question.

"I won't—there's nothing to explain," snapped the actress, again raising her hand to soothe the snake.

"You don't know anything of leading Miss Carringford through the wing above that in which Miss Gorsden was slain, eh?"

"No, I don't. You're simply guessing."

"You don't know that Minna Gorsden was killed by a thin stiletto that first passed through the canvas of the intervening wing, eh?"

A flash of fear darted from the soubrette's eyes. It did not escape the notice of Phil. The scent was getting warm.

"You're talking in riddles," she muttered, uneasily.

"Not much," pursued the reporter, more confidently. Then he proceeded to attempt a bluff. "Maybe it isn't true that Minna Gorsden was not killed with a stiletto, eh?"

"How do I know?" cried the actress "Sweetie, this gentleman really acts as if he really craved to be bitten, doesn't he? Loosen up your fangs, Sweetie. I'll soon turn you on him."

"Maybe it isn't true that the weapon

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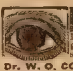

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was found in Chester Hawkins' room, eh?" insinuated Phil, with assurance.

"How do you know it was?" For the first time the bars on the self-control Annabelle had shown were down. She spoke with a little gasp. The snake, scenting the agitation of its mistress, began to sway its head from side to side in a peculiarly threatening cadence.

"Because I found it there," declared the Star man.

"Well, don't connect me with it," she exclaimed, defiantly.

"I have connected you with it, Miss Wesson, so you might as well tell the truth about the entire matter"

Phil noticed the hand of the actress drop from the neck of the snake to the table. He attributed the move to nervousness. Instead, the soubrette grasped a heavy paper weight, and lifting it before he could interfere, hurled it savagely at his head

He turned to escape the missile, but it caught him fairly just above the temple. Instantly a sickening faintness possessed him; he tried to clutch the table for support, but found himself sinking unsteadily to the floor.

His last recollection before consciousness went completely out was of the snake, circling about his head as if to strike him with its vicious darting fangs.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

The Sky Smuggler.

(Continued from page two.)

matters should be arranged; I would insist upon her going to her own room in another quarter of the bungalow, with the faithful Tige to keep her company, while I curled up in the comfortable big chair beside the fire, to spend the balance of the long night as best I could, unmindful of the husky voices of the storm without

When I noticed that she showed signs of drowsiness I outlined my plan, and the girl fell in with it at once, wishing me good night, and going out of the big livingroom with Tige trotting at her heels; the last I saw of her was when she turned to send back a smile that remained to haunt my waking hours, and cause me to sigh many times; for it had even reached that point with me, that every time I met Tressie Morgan the future seemed more or less of a blank unless it had association with her.

To be frank, I secretly confessed to myself that for the first time in all my life I was positively head over ears in love.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once.

* * *

The First Wife's Son.

(Continued from page eight.)

"Leslie, I want you. Leslie yes, I mean you."

It was strange that his father should call him Leslie now for the third time; but Eddie attributed it to the mental confusion due to weakness and suffering. Clearly it was to him his father wished to speak, for when he bent over the bed a look of relief and satisfaction came into Sir James' eyes

"Leslie, I am dyin I know it. There is something I must tell you, a great wrong has been doone——"

"The doctor!" Lady Gower exclaimed, with a long shuddering sigh, like one who has narrowly escaped a great danger

* * * * * * *

Leslie Gower, when at length discovered by the servants who had been sent in search of him, came, pale and breathless, up to the house. The doctor had given his verdict—in a few hours at most Sir James Gower would be dead. Leslie stood dazed, looking down on the white face. It was not half an hour since he had parted from Terry; her promise to be his wife was still sounding sweetly in his ears. And his father had been so kind, so unexpectedly sympathetic, when he had hesitatingly confided to him his love for Terry! The young man felt a rush of remorseful feeling as he looked back over the past. If he had only been like Eddie—Eddie, who had never given his father a moment's annoyance or anxiety.

"It is Leslie, Jim—Leslie!" Lady Gower said with a feverish eagerness, "You were asking for him—he is here. Speak to him, Jim, dear!"

Sir James opened his eyes—they were calm and clear. He closed his fingers on the hand Leslie put in his. The young man dropped his head on the coverlet, murmuring broken words of grief; of affection and penitence.

"Heaven bless you, my dear boy!" Sir James said faintly, but smiling. "No, no, don't speak of anything that is past! Do this for me now—take your mother away. I must speak with your brother alone."

Leslie glanced at his mother, who shrank more closely to the bedside, a despairing look on her white face.

"I must see Eddie alone!" Sir James said in a clear, firm voice. "Cora, dear, go—go if you have any love for me left!"

Leslie rose, gently putting his arm round his mother, and together they left the room.

"Eddie—come closer!"

Eddie obeyed.

"I have something to tell you. No, I have no pain just now, and my brain is perfectly clear. I have done you a great wrong. I must confess to you before I die."

"Father!"

"No, let me speak! I have deceived you and deceived the world about you all your life. You, and not your brother, are my eldest son and my lawful heir." Then in a few sentences, Sir James told his son the story of his marriage with Cora Gwynne, of her suggestion that they should change the children's names, of their homecoming. Listening, the young man understood a childish recollection which had often puzzled him—the deck of a steamer, the dancing, blue sea around, himself looking up into his mother's lovely face framed in golden hair, her laughing voice in his ears—

"You are not Leslie now—you are Eddie and Eddie is Leslie."

Subsequently the child had referred to this little scene and to the exchange of names; but his mother, giving way to one of her capricious outbursts of anger, had forbidden him to mention the subject either to her or to any one else, and had threatened him with punishment if he did so. Gradually the thing faded into that dim region in the memory where real recollection and imagination are indistinguishable. Now, however, it came back clearly, and the confused feeling of doubt and pain which it had left on his childish mind seemed to return, increased a hundredfold, to add to his present suffering.

It was true, as Rachel Dene had said, that the young man had borne the burden of his physical deformity so bravely and cheerfully that others wellnigh forgot it; but—though he was quite free from morbid self-consciousness or unmanly repining—there were necessarily times when he realized with a feeling of pain that he was not as other men. It might be just a careless word, a too openly pitying or curious look which brought the fact home to him.

And his mother? In his childhood there had been a good deal of fear mingled with his adoring love for the beautiful, passionate woman who was at one time so gentle and tender, at another so unreasonably harsh; but as he grew up and his character developed Cora had come to lean on him more and more. The remorseful consciousness of the wrong she had done him joined with her clinging trust in him, in his love for her and her husband and son, in his constant readiness to serve and help them, his unfailing cheerfulness and patience. He had believed so utterly in her! It was like a stab in his heart to know that she had duped him and that his brother had innocently been his supplanter; but strangely enough, the bitterest pain had come with the thought that she was not really his mother.

"We thought—we persuaded ourselves," the dying man said, "that we were doing you no injury. We have tricked ourselves as well as others, or tried to do so. I had left you in my will the larger share of my small private fortune, though your brother might have needed it, seeing how heavy the expenses of the estates are. I thought, with that and what you may earn when you have finished your law studies, you would be well provided for. It was all a terrible blunder, a piece of criminal folly, as unfair to your brother as to yourself. Poor fellow, he is not fitted to be an elder son—he is weak and extravagant and does not know his own mind—"

"No, no, father!" the young man interposed. "Don't say that—Leslie is all right at bottom."

"Eddie, you mean," the dying man said, with a faint, mournful smile. "You are Leslie. Ah, it is on her—your mother—that this blow will fall the most heavily, and I am leaving her to bear it alone!"

His voice died away—his weakness was visibly increasing.

"Father," the young man said, bending over the bed—"father will you leave her in my hands? No one but I knows this—no one will ever know!"

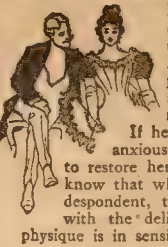
Sir James' pale face was suddenly lighted up, his eyes were eagerly fixed on his son's face, his feeble hands tightened their clasp on the strong fingers that held them.

"Father," the young man went on, "I don't care anything about the inheritance. Leslie and my mother—yes; and your good name—are my dearest possessions. It is taking part in a deception, but let Heaven judge whether I am to blame! Father, I vow that I will never betray my mother nor deprive Leslie of what he believes is his."

There was a strange radiance in the pale face on the pillow. Sir James feebly loosened his hands from his son's and stretched them forth as if to pronounce a benediction; and as the words left his lips, he died.

(To be continued next week.)

When He Courted You



He didn't complain if you were a little despondent or irritable at times. Now he does. He's the same man. He didn't understand then. He doesn't now. Then he thought it was caprice and liked it. Now he thinks it is caprice and doesn't like it. But now he's busy getting money.

If he realized the full truth he would be more than anxious to have the wife he loves take the right remedy to restore her to true womanly health. Most men don't know that when a woman is weak, nervous, irritable and despondent, there is invariably something radically wrong with the delicate feminine organs with which her entire physique is in sensitive sympathy.

There is one, and just one remedy, tried and proven, that will put things right when the feminine organism is weak or diseased. It is

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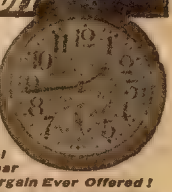

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BOY'S
AND
GIRL'S
CORNER

THE MERRY GOOSE MINE;

Or, Dan Newton's Up-Hill Fight

By WILL LISENBEE

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Begun in No. 39 Sept. 30. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE loss of the cabin, as well as a part of the household goods, might have proved a sad calamity to Mrs. Akers had it not been for the generosity of the many who had hastened to give relief. Captain Hickman gave a generous donation toward building a new house for the widow and to replace what she had lost, and many others hastened to follow his example.

A score of hands volunteered to help in the erecting of another house, and in a very short time it was completed and ready for occupancy. Meantime, the widow and her son had remained at the cabin of the generous miner who placed it at their disposal, while he took up his quarters with Hickman and Dan.

After the heavy rains the mines were so flooded with water that work was suspended in many of them, among which was the Merry Goose.

One evening, as Dan entered the tent, Captain Hickman laid aside the paper he had been reading and asked, abruptly:

"How would you like to take a trip to Kansas City with me?"

"Why, the best in the world," replied Dan, in surprise.

"Then we shall start in the morning," announced the captain.

Dan looked amazed.

"I have a little business there," explained the captain, "and as it will be some time before we can go to work in the mine, I thought it a good time to go. I think it will do you no harm to get out and brush shoulders with the world a little."

"I shall be glad to go," assented Dan. "I have often wished to visit Kansas City. I understand that it is growing rapidly."

"That is the point. It is growing, and will soon be one of the great cities of the West. You may think it strange that I have made this decision so suddenly," went on the captain, "but a half-hour ago nothing was further from my mind than a trip to Kansas City. It was something I saw in this paper that led me to make the decision."

As he spoke he pointed to an advertisement in the paper which read:

"Mills & Gregor. Dealers in Farm Implements, Wagons, Buggies, Carriages, etc., 38, 40 and 42 West River street."

Dan glanced at the advertisement and then fixed a look of perplexity on the captain.

Captain Hickman smiled.

"I see you are mystified," he said, "but I shall explain. No doubt the firm of Mills & Gregor does an extensive business."

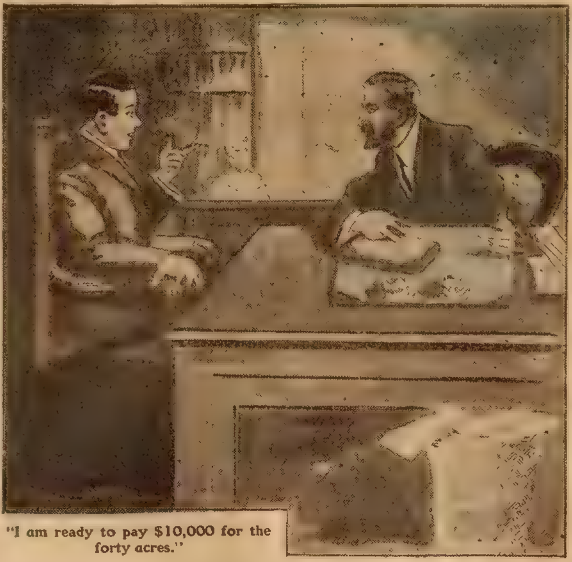
"I should think so, sir."

"That is the way I figure it out, for they occupy three lots and carry a half-page advertisement. West River street lies in what is called the West Bottoms. It is quite a distance from the business portion of the city, and lies along the low bottoms where it is frequently submerged by the overflow of the Kaw River. Yet it seems that very substantial business houses are being erected there. Twenty years ago I came into possession of some lots in the West Bottoms, through the death of a relative. They were considered worthless at the time, and I thought nothing of them."

"They ought to be valuable now," said Dan.

"That is the way it strikes me. But I may not be able to get anything out of mine, as they are leased. It came about in this way. About ten years ago, on my return from the Pacific coast, I was ill for several weeks, being afflicted with rheumatism. A part of the time I was cared for by my sister, Mrs. Simpkins. After I had gone away I had another attack, and as I had earned nothing for a long time, I was almost penniless. One day Colonel Simpkins came to me and asked me about the lots I owned in Kansas City. He had been doing a little in real estate there, and said he might be able to dispose of the lots for a trifle more than they cost. Later he came again, and said he had a scheme on hand to lease them, for I had told him I did not want to sell for a mere pittance. He said some parties wanted them to store wood and coal on, or something of the sort, and that as I wanted to hold the lots, this would be a good chance to have them earn something towards paying the taxes, which were very heavy at that time. I did not consider the lots of any value just then, and doubted that they would ever be, located as they were in the bottoms. He said he could probably get as much as fifty dollars a year out of them above what would pay the taxes, and that if I would give him a power of attorney to act for me, he would look after the matter, as he had other business interests there. I told him to go on and do the best he could. A week or so later, he handed me fifty dollars, saying he would send me a like sum each year; for I was to start for California as soon as I should be able to travel, being offered the command of a vessel plying between San Francisco and the ports to the north. I am a little hazy as to the provisions of the lease, for, as I said before, I did not consider the property of much value. It was a very loose way to do business, but that has been one fault of mine which I have not got rid of.

"I was not feeling very well, and have but a confused remembrance of the whole transaction. I was glad enough to have it off my hands and thought little of it afterwards. I went to California soon after, and that is the last I heard of the matter, excepting that I received fifty dollars each year from Colonel Simpkins, less his fees, which were five dollars on each collection. That is the way the matter stands, and this evening, as I was glancing over the paper, I saw the advertisement I showed you."



"I am ready to pay $10,000 for the forty acres."

"Then your lots lie near there?"

"In the West Bottoms."

"Near where Mills & Gregor are doing business, I mean," replied Dan.

Captain Hickman nodded.

"Their place of business is on my lots," replied the captain.

"Is it possible?" cried Dan.

"There is no doubt about it. My lots are 38, 40 and 42 West River street, and this is the address given in the paper. That is not all. I have heard of late that many of the big warehouses are being erected in the West Bottoms, and that property there is running out of sight. So you see, it is very necessary for me to go to Kansas City and look into the matter.

"I should think so. Do you remember all the provisions of the lease?"

"I do not. In fact, I remember nothing to speak of, excepting what Simpkins told me. I am quite sure the right to sell at the end of ten years was specified."

"And the time has expired?"

"Yes, a month or two ago, as near as I can remember. I shall call on Mills & Gregor and examine their copy of the lease."

"You have not got a copy?"

"The original is in the hands of Colonel Simpkins, who is my agent."

"You might have looked into the matter while you were at Springhaven, if you had thought about it."

"I should prefer to see Mills & Gregor. To be frank about the matter, I am not sure that the colonel has acted fairly, so I shall go direct to Mills & Gregor and learn the truth."

"Have you ever visited Kansas City?"

"I have passed through there on my way to the West, but never stopped off."

"Then you have never seen your property there?"

"Never. I am rather careless in business matters, and this is why I have not prospered as I might have done. But I'll look into this affair and find out what is in it. So you might as well pack up what you desire to take with you, and we'll be off when the stage starts in the morning."

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the following morning Captain Hickman felt a slight attack of his old malady, rheumatism, and decided that it would be necessary to abandon the trip to Kansas City.

"Since I come to think of it," he said to Dan, "it is just as well for me to remain here and look after things. You can do the business quite as well as I could, and it will save me the inconvenience of making the journey."

Dan looked surprised.

"If you think I am capable of attending to the business for you," he said, "I shall be glad to do so."

"I am confident that you can. I will

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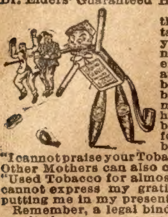

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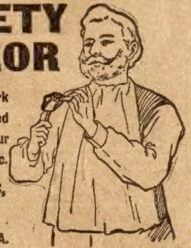

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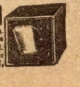

give you all the instructions I think necessary. Find out what kind of a lease Mills & Gregor have, and get a copy of it. If they want to buy the lots, get their best offer, and then try to find out from some other source what the lots ought to bring. I can't see as there is anything more that can be done right at this time. It would be well for you to write me and wait for further instructions if anything turns up to make it necessary. I will leave that to you. While you are absent on this business I will pay all expenses, of course, and allow you the same wages as if you were at work in the mine. Here's a purse. You will find fifty dollars in it. Don't be afraid of a little extra expense. Go to the best hotel and attend the theater if you desire. I would like for you to see a little of the city while you are there."

"Captain Hickman," said Dan, "you have been very kind to me from the time of our first meeting, and I want you to understand that I am grateful. I shall do my best to repay your kindness, and if it is in my power, you shall not regret the confidence you have reposed in me."

"I am sure of that, my boy," replied the captain. "And now it is time you were off. The stage will leave within half an hour, so you had better start at once."

An hour later, Dan, sitting in the rickety stagecoach, was on his way to the railroad station at Dipton, fifty miles away.

As the stage left Jacktown behind, Dan's attention was attracted by a cluster of weather-beaten buildings, dilapidated and forbidding in their aspect, standing in the glare of the morning sun.

In front of one of the buildings was the sign:

"AGATEVILLE INN,
"Solomon Digg, Prop."

The sign was faded and almost obliterated. Agateville, it would seem, had long ago passed its prime, and the rise of Jacktown, it's more properous neighbor, had doubtless given it the finishing blow.

As Dan read the faded sign, he had a dim recollection of having heard the name of Agateville before, but when or where he could not recall.

Just in front of Dan sat two men. The first was an old man of perhaps seventy. His form was bent and his hair was almost white. His companion was a man of perhaps forty-five. He was well-dressed and wore the air of one who is well-fed and contented with his lot in life.

"I mind well when the first house was built in Agateville," the old man was saying, in a thin, rasping voice. "It was nigh to forty years ago. The inn was built first. Old Solomon Digg built it, fer folks used to come here to drink the water at the big spring in the holler. They say it cures rheumatiz, but it never did me any good."

The other man laughed. "Imagination has a great deal to do with some of those water cures we hear so much about," he remarked. "Well, the new strike made on the Paddington Mining Company's land may change the village to a city."

"It's too close to Jacktown," commented the old man. "Agateville will never be anything. People these days ain't lookin' out so much fer their health as they are fer money. They'd run plumb off from a spring of the elixir of life fer a lead mine."

"You are not far wrong," smiled the other. "I have been here a week, and have never drank from the spring once, but have tramped all over the country looking for indications of lead."

"And you found 'em on my forty," chuckled the old man.

"Well, that point is to be settled when the land is prospected, but I believe there is lead there."

"Your believin' it put four thousand dollars in my pocket, so I'm perty well satisfied."

"I'm glad of it, though I may never get a 'shine' on the land."

"I hope you will."

"Thank you. If I can get the forty adjoining the one I got of you I shall be lucky."

"Is it better than the one I sold you?"

"Oh, I haven't said that," replied the other, guardedly. "I'd like to get it, though. I was in hopes you could help me find the owner."

"I wish I could. Old Johnny Miller used to own it, but the one that got it of him was a stranger in these parts and no one knows him er whar he is."

"He may come back here now that lead has been struck near the land."

"That's so."

"If he should, you will let me know?"

"Yes, sir, I'll do that."

"Here's my card. Don't forget."

"I shan't."

"Don't wait to write. Send me a telegram. You can send it any morning by the stage driver to the railroad station."

"I will do it."

"Here's five dollars to pay for the telegram and for your trouble," and he thrust a five-dollar bill into the old man's hand.

"But what if he don't come?"

"Then you will be five dollars richer."

"Thank ye," laughed the old man. "I run down here every few days to see my daughter, who lives at Jacktown, an' if the owner of the forty shows up I'll let you know." A couple of miles farther on the old man got out, and bidding his traveling companion goodby, went up a hill in the direction of a farmhouse.

At noon the stage stopped at an inn where the passengers got dinner, and from there another stage carried them to the railroad station. It was almost sunset by this time, and after taking supper at the village hotel, Dan took the train for Kansas City, which left at 8:20. As he was compelled to lie over some hours where he changed cars, he did not reach his destination till nine o'clock the following morning. He was rather confused as he got off at the Union Depot and found himself in the midst of the hurrying, bustling crowd. He looked about him in some bewilderment, and spying an eating house across the tracks, he went over and ordered breakfast.

There was a news stand in the front of the establishment, and Dan purchased a morning paper and a map of the city. The latter he studied carefully while he ate. He had little difficulty in finding West River street on the map, and was gratified to learn that it was no great distance from the Union Depot. He had intended to go up town and wait till afternoon to call on Mills & Gregor, as he was weary from the night's journey and loss of sleep; but he now decided that he would call on them at once.

Thrusting the paper and map into his pocket, he set out across the West Bottoms in the direction of River Street.

CHAPTER XXVII.

As Dan turned into River Street his eyes fell on a large three-story brick building on the front of which was printed in very large letters,

"**MILLS & GREGOR,**
"Dealers in Farm Implements,
"Buggies & Carriages."

A single glance told Dan that it was a large establishment, and he reflected that the lots on which such an establishment had its buildings must be very valuable. As he entered the building he was met by a clerk who greeted him pleasantly.

"I wish to see one of the proprietors," Dan said.

"Mr. Gregor has just gone into the office," replied the clerk. "I will see if he is busy. What name, please?"

Dan gave his name, and the clerk walked toward the rear end of the store. In a few moments he returned, saying that Mr. Gregor would see the visitor. Dan was conducted into a large, well-lighted office, where a man of middle age was sitting at a roll-top desk, a pile of letters before him.

"This is Mr. Newton who called to see you, Mr. Gregor," said the clerk, and then withdrew.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Newton," said the merchant, as he shook hands with the visitor. "Just take a chair there and make yourself comfortable. I'm a little busy just now, but the business can wait."

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I have in my possession a prescription for nervous debility, lack of vigor, weakened manhood, failing memory and lame back, brought on by excesses, unnatural drains, or the follies of youth, that has cured so many worn and nervous men right in their own homes—without any additional help or medicine—that I think every man who wishes to regain his manly power and virility, quickly and quietly, should have a copy. So I have determined to send a copy of the prescription free of charge, in a plain, ordinary sealed envelope to any man who will write me for it.

This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest-acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT-TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 3791 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain, ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $3.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

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We will send you one full quart bottle of Fels 3-Star Whiskey, absolutely free, along with your first order for 8 full quart bottles of Fels 3-Star Whiskey for $5.45 and we pay the express charges. After you receive the 9 full quart bottles, open one of them, test it anyway you like and if not entirely satisfactory, you have the privilege of returning to us the remaining 8 bottles and the one extra bottle you may keep free and we will immediately return your $5.45. Or send us $2.95 for 4 full quart bottles of Fels 3-Star Whiskey, express prepaid, and we will include one test bottle free. Test the free bottle and if not absolutely satisfactory and the best whiskey you ever tasted at any price, just return to us the 4 bottles and keep the free bottle and we will refund your $2.95 without question or argument. With each order we give a free Gold Tipped Glass and Patent Corkscrew. Remember, we say we pay the express charges; look close before you permit some of the low prices of Mail Order Houses to get your order and make you pay the express charges.

We mean to prove superiority in the whiskey business; we mean to prove at our expense, by giving a free test bottle, that Fels 3-Star Whiskey has no equal. Our quart bottles are full 32-ounce quarts and not short quarts and we guarantee every statement we make and back them with our paid up capital of $400,000.00. If you want real whiskey and not weak, watery concoctions, send us your remittance on our free test proposition. The taste is the test, that will prove more than we can write. Address orders and letters and make remittances payable to **A. Fels, Mgr.,** or

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"I shall not take up much of you time," said Dan. "I am sent here by Mr. Benjamin Hickman to make some inquiries in reference to a lease on some lots."

"Ah, I see!" nodded Mr. Gregor, in some surprise. "I am glad, indeed, that you have called. We are anxious to have the matter settled up and off our minds. Is Mr. Hickman in the city?"

"No, sir; I left him at Jacktown, a little mining camp in the southern part of the State. It was his intention to come and see you, but an attack of rheumatism prevented."

"That is unfortunate, but no doubt, since he sent you, we can come to something like an understanding. What are your instructions from Mr. Hickman?"

"He desired me to find out what kind of a lease you had, and if you will oblige him, to procure a copy of it."

"Why, is it possible that he does not know?"

"He has never seen the lease nor a copy of it, as I understand from his statement."

"That is rather strange," commented Mr. Gregor.

"Perhaps you will understand it better when I explain," went on Dan. "The business has been in the hands of Colonel Simpkins, a brother-in-law to Mr. Hickman. Mr. Hickman gave him a power of attorney to act in the matter for him, and as the lots were considered of little value at the time, Mr. Hickman gave the matter no thought."

"I see—I see," replied Mr. Gregor, nodding slowly. "He relied on his brother-in-law entirely?"

"Yes, sir."

"Colonel Simpkins is a shrewd business man, and no doubt Mr. Hickman was wise in his choice of an agent. However, it is always well for one to keep an eye on his own business. I dare say Colonel Simpkins had remitted regularly the sums we paid on the lease?"

"I think so, sir. Mr. Hickman said that he had received the fifty dollars regularly each year."

"Fifty dollars a year!" gasped the merchant. "You mean five hundred dollars, don't you?"

Dan looked amazed.

"Why, fifty dollars a year was the amount Mr. Hickman received. I am positive of that," he replied.

"Then there has been some underhanded work done!" cried Mr. Gregor, a grave look coming into his face.

"I am afraid so," Dan admitted.

"There is no doubt of it," continued Mr. Gregor, "To put it in plain words, Mr. Hickman has been fleeced to the amount of four hundred and fifty dollars a year. For the ten years, four thousand and five hundred dollars! A neat little sum, upon my word!"

"It is indeed," assented Dan.

"It is fortunate that Mr. Hickman took it into his head to look into the matter."

"He will be greatly surprised to learn that you have been paying five hundred dollars a year instead of fifty."

"I should think so. Mr. Hickman must be very careless in matters of business."

"He says so himself."

Mr. Gregor reflected a moment. "Mr. Simpkins is a man of considerable property," he said, at length, "and no doubt Mr. Hickman can recover the balance due him, and I should advise him to do so at once. I will show you the lease, and we can look it over, and I'll have a copy of it made which you can deliver to Mr. Hickman."

He opened the safe and took therefrom a box containing the lease, and unfolding it, spread it out on the desk.

"You will see that it is to run for thirty years," he said. "But at the end of ten years the payment is to be one thousand dollars a year instead of five hundred; and at the end of twenty years, two thousand dollars a year. You will also notice that, at the expiration of the first ten years, we have the option of buying the three lots at five thousand dollars each."

"I see," said Dan. "Have you made any decision as to whether you will buy the lots at that figure or continue to occupy them under the provisions of the lease?"

"We shall prefer to allow the lease to remain in force rather than buy the lots, as the money invested in our business will bring us larger returns."

"Then I shall notify Mr. Hickman of your decision."

"Yes. And as to Mr. Simpkins, I should advise that his services be dispensed with in the future. We should prefer to do business direct with Mr. Hickman. By his dishonest dealing, Mr. Simpkins has forfeited all claims for consideration. I am surprised and shocked to learn of his duplicity."

"I should think so, sir. He is highly respected in the village where he lives."

"You know him, then?"

"No, sir, I am not acquainted with him, but I have been in Springhaven where he lives. I have relatives there."

"He is considered pretty well fixed financially?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He is said to be one of the richest men in the town."

"Then it is not likely that Mr. Hickman will have any difficulty in getting a settlement out of him. I should advise that he be called to account without delay."

"I am quite sure he will."

"Meantime, I shall not recognize Colonel Simpkins as having any authority to act for Mr. Hickman. He wrote me not long since that he expected to be in Kansas City some time during the month. If he calls I shall repudiate him. I dare say this will meet with the approval of Mr. Hickman?"

"Certainly, sir; I can vouch for that."

"Very well, then," replied Mr. Gregor. "We shall consider that point settled. I hope that Mr. Hickman will be able to visit the city soon. Is he a relative of yours?"

"No, sir. I became acquainted with him in August, and have been working for him in the mines."

"It speaks well for you that he should send you on an errand of such importance," remarked Mr. Gregor. "But I am inclined to believe that he committed no error of judgment."

"He has been very kind to me," replied Dan, coloring at the compliment.

"Are your parents living?" asked Mr. Gregor.

"No, sir. An aunt is the nearest relative I have living."

"And you have to make your own way in the world?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have never lived in a large city?"

"No, sir."

"Should you like to?"

"Yes, sir, if I could find something to do."

"Do you know anything about keeping accounts?"

"Yes, sir. I studied bookkeeping at the high school, but did not finish."

"Would it be too inquisitive to ask what you receive from Mr. Hickman?"

"Not at all," assured Dan. "I am paid two dollars a day and given my board and lodging."

"Why, that is very good, indeed, for a boy of your age," declared the merchant. "It is more than you would be likely to earn in the city for some time. I should not advise you to leave your present employer, but if you should want to come to the city, I should like to have you advise me."

"Thank you, I shall do so," replied Dan, rising. "I don't know how long my present job will last."

"You are not going?"

"Yes, sir. I want to see a little of the city. Shall I call this evening for the copy of the lease?"

"Yes, to be sure. I'll have it made this afternoon. Can you come at four?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have no friends in the city whom you intend to visit, have you?"

"No, sir."

"Then," replied the merchant, "I shall look for you at four, and you are to consider yourself my guest during your stay in the city."

"Oh, thank you," replied Dan. "You are very kind. I hope it won't be imposing on you——"

"Not in the least," smiled the merchant. "I shall be glad to have you; besides, I want to have some further conversation with you before you go away."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Dan returned to the Union Depot, and from there took the cable cars up town. It was in the days of the great "boom" in Kansas City, and the hurrying crowds, the feverish activity and pandemonium of sound were to Dan something to confuse and bewilder the mind. He spent some hours in viewing the city, and then went to the Coates House where he got dinner and rested for an hour or so. He got one of the first editions of an evening paper and glanced leisurely over it. He didn't expect to find anything of interest to him particularly, and read rather aimlessly, till suddenly his eyes became riveted on the headlines:

RICH STRIKES OF LEAD AND ZINC AT JACKTOWN.

So Says Frederick Illington,
The Capitalist, Who Has
Just Returned From
That Mining Camp.

Under the headlines was an interview with the Capitalist, in which he was quoted as saying that there was a great future for the new mining camp, and that he had invested largely in land lying in that locality. He told of Jacktown's remoteness from a railroad, and of his journey by stage the day before from Jacktown to the railroad station.

This brought swiftly to Dan's mind the stranger who had come with him in the stage from Jacktown; who had been in conversation with the old man. It left no doubt in his mind that the stranger was Frederick Illington, the capitalist. He remembered seeing him enter the train, but he had taken a berth in the sleeper, and Dan had not seen him again during the journey.

Dan thought of the conversation between the well-dressed stranger and the old man as the stage was passing the village of Agateville. Somehow the name of the little deserted village clung to his memory, and more than once he tried to recall when and where he had heard it.

He was puzzling over it, when suddenly it came to him like a flash.

He opened his valise hurriedly and took out some papers and documents—some left by his father. Among these was the deed to the forty acres of land, which was mentioned, as the reader will

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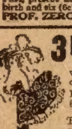

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remember, in an earlier chapter. As he drew out the document and glanced over it, he saw that it was executed before a notary at Agateville. This, then, was where Dan had seen the name of the village. The forty must lie near the village, and in that case it must be valuable!

The thought thrilled Dan with sudden interest. The big strike of mineral in the locality had sent the price of land skyward, and capitalists were investing heavily in it. He remembered that the old man in the stage had spoken of having received four thousand dollars for a forty-acre tract near Agateville, and the well-dressed stranger had made inquiries about the whereabouts of the owner of another tract adjoining it. The name of the owner had not been mentioned, yet the name of the man from whom the land had been purchased by the present owner had been mentioned by the old man. His very words came back to Dan now and sent his mind into a confused whirl. "Old Johnny Miller used to own it," the old man had said, and eager and breathless, Dan now turned his gaze on the deed. He read:

"KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: That we, John Miller, of Agateville, Missouri, and Mary J., wife of said John Miller——"

Dan stopped abruptly. It was all as plain as day now. The supposed worthless tract of land left him by his father was the one the capitalist, Frederick Illington, was making inquiries about. There could be no doubt about it.

Dan sat staring at the document, his mind highly excited. The forty-acre tract was now worth four thousand dollars at least. The thought fairly took Dan's breath away.

It was hard for him to realize his good fortune. He thrust the papers back into the valise and sat leaning forward on his hands, his elbows resting on his knees, trying to think coherently.

There might be some mistake after all, he thought, yet it did not seem probable.

But there was a way to set his mind at rest. He would call on Frederick Illington and settle the matter at once. Dan got a directory from the hotel clerk and consulted it. He ran his eyes down the "I" column till he came to Illington. "Illington, Frederick," he read, capitalist, president of the Illington Land & Loan Company, No. ——— Delaware street."

A half-hour later Dan presented himself at Mr. Illington's office.

"Mr. Illington is very busy," one of the clerks informed Dan, "and he does not wish to be disturbed except on very important business."

"My business is important," replied Dan.

The clerk smiled. "It may be to you," he said, "but is it important to Mr. Illington?"

"I am quite sure it is," replied Dan. "I shall not detain him but a moment if it is not."

Just then the ground glass door opening into the private office of Mr. Illington opened, and a man emerged. A single glance told Dan that it was his fellow passenger on the stage the day before.

"This young gentleman says he desires to see you on important business, Mr. Illington," said the clerk.

"He will have to call again, as I have an engagement down town," replied the president of Illington Land & Loan Company, not even glancing at Dan. Dan colored slightly at the man's words and air of superiority, and a feeling something like resentment rose in his breast. In this he was a trifle over-sensitive, as the reader will agree, but let it be remembered that Dan Newton had never rubbed shoulders with the hard, practical business world, and he knew little of its ways.

"I shall not trouble you by calling again," Dan said, quietly. "I, too, have an appointment," and with this he turned away.

Mr. Illington glanced quickly at the youth who had dared to answer him in such an imperious manner, and as he did so the look of swift annoyance that came over his face vanished, and he laughed.

"Don't be in a hurry," he called. "I am going down town and we can walk together, if you don't mind."

Dan stopped abruptly, feeling that he had acted hastily.

"Certainly, with pleasure Mr. Illingtonton," he said. "I hope I did not seem rude."

"Not at all," assured the capitalist. "Your time may be of as much value to you as mine is to me."

"I didn't expect to trouble you but a moment," replied Dan. "I understood that you wanted to know the whereabouts of the owner of a tract of land near Agateville, and I called to give you the desired information."

"Indeed! Then you are the person I want to see. Suppose we step into the office? We can talk better there."

"Thank you, sir, if you can spare the time?"

"We will take the time," was the reply, as he led the way into his private office.

He pushed a chair for the visitor and took one himself.

(Concluded next week.)

We want to send you a trial order of HAYNER BOTTLED-IN-BOND WHISKEY on our guarantee it will please you—or it will not cost you one cent.

FULL QUARTS
4
$3.20
IN STRONG SEALED CASE
WE PAY EXPRESS CHARGES
HAYNER
PRIVATE STOCK
WHISKEY
BOTTLED IN BOND
THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY

THAT guarantee is as fair and square as we know how to make it.

Send us your order for four quarts of this magnificent Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey. When it arrives—TRY IT—and if you don't find it all we claim and up to your highest expectations in every way—send it back at our expense—and we will return every cent of your money.

You see—WE MUST MAKE GOOD—we must send you a quality that will win your instant favor—and we will do it.

Note the price—only 80 cents a quart (express paid) for this highest grade bottled-in-bond whiskey—a whiskey that is distilled, aged and bottled under U. S. Government supervision—and every bottle sealed with the Government's official bottled-in-bond stamp—positive assurance that it is fully aged—full 100% proof—and full measure—and absolutely PURE to the last drop.

Where else can you do so well?

LET us prove our claims to you. Let us show you what a magnificent quality we are producing.

Let us convince you of the really great saving our "DIRECT FROM DISTILLERY" plan of selling means to you.

Remember, you take no chances. We take all the risk—and we stand all the expense if we fail to please you.

No letter is necessary—

Cut Out and use this Coupon and address our nearest office

THE HAYNER DISTILLING CO.
Enclosed find $3.20 for which send me FOUR full quart bottles of Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey—express paid—as per your offer. It is understood that if this whiskey is not found as represented and satisfactory to me in every way, it may be returned at your expense—and my $3.20 is to be promptly refunded. **D-30**

Name ____________________

Address ____________________

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Orders for Ariz., Cal., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N.Mex., Ore., Utah, Wash. or Wyo. must be on the basis of 4 quarts for $4.00 by Express Prepaid or 20 quarts for $15.20 by Freight Prepaid. 6-N

THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY, Dept. D-30

DISTILLERY TROY, OHIO Established 1866

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DR. MAHON'S
PINE NEEDLE
CATARRH REMEDY

CATARRH SUFFERERS Don't spend time and money to go to the pine woods of Maine and North Carolina. You can get the benefit of the curative properties of the balmy, healing pine needle at home by using our wonderful Pine Needle Remedy. A postal with your name and address (send no money) will be as good as a R. R. ticket to the pine woods. Write today for a liberal sample treatment—prepaid. **SAMPLE FREE**

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To advertise our business, make new friends and [illegible] our great catalogue of Elgin Watches we will send this elegant watch to any address by mail post paid for **ONLY 95 CENTS.** Regular gentleman's size, open face, full nickel silver plated plain polished case, Arabic dial, lever escapement, stem wind and stem set, a perfect timekeeper and fully guaranteed for 5 years. In addition to the watch, and without any extra charge whatever we send five Mdse. Certificates worth one dollar each when used as part payment on purchases from our catalogue. Send this advertisement to us with your name & address and 95c, and watch & certificates will be sent by return mail postpaid. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Send 95c today as this advertisement may not appear again. **R. E. CHALMERS & CO., 356 Dearborn St., CHICAGO**

KNIT WOOL SHAWLS FREE!
WHITE OR RED

We have made a contract with one of the big mills for a lot of woolen shawls.

We are going to give these shawls away to our readers.

The shawls are made of woolen yarn. They come in two colors, white or red. These shawls can be used in many ways: as a shoulder shawl, like that shown in the cut, or they can be used to throw over the head.

Probably nothing is so useful in a home as a shawl like this. Just the thing for changeable weather. It is very handy to throw on the head when you run into your neighbor's house. Fine to wrap up the baby in. Throw it over your shoulders when sitting in a draft.

These shawls are large and well-made, and we want every reader of this paper to have one of them, so we will send you one FREE OF ALL CHARGE, if you will fill out the coupon below and enclose $1.00 for a year's subscription to this paper.

We send the shawl all charges prepaid. Be sure to state whether you want white or red in the proper space below.

This is a splendid offer, and we are glad to be able to distribute these shawls among our readers.

We treat old and new subscribers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber please say so when you write, and we will have your new subscription commence when the old one expires.

To THE CHICAGO LEDGER: Enclosed please find $1.00 for which enter my subscription for one year and send me one

(Color) . . . . Shawl, all charges prepaid.
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Story of THE RED and THE BLUE

CATARRH

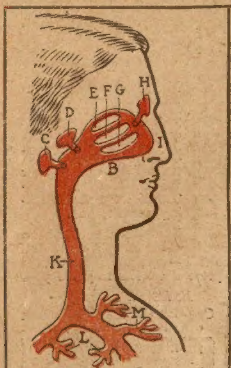

FIG. 1

Fig. 1—THE RED in the above cut shows the wide extent of catarrh—ALL THROUGH THE HEAD, DOWN INTO THE THROAT (K), INTO THE LUNGS (M & L): into the ears (C); into the frontal sinus (H); into the sphenoidal sinus (D), etc.

TO CURE CATARRH IN THE ABOVE PARTS IT MUST BE REACHED BY THE REMEDY.

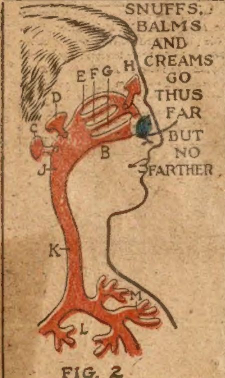

FIG. 2

Fig. 2—Illustrates the inevitable failure of SALVES, BALMS, SNUFFS, etc. SEE how much RED remains to show the parts unreached—how little of the BLUE to show the parts that are reached.

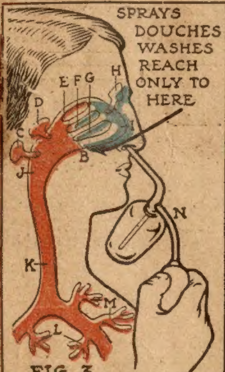

FIG. 3

Fig. 3—Shows how little can be done by ATOMIZERS, SPRAYS, DOUCHES, and all WASHES and LIQUIDS.

By no possibility can these methods of treatment reach the real seat of the disease.

WHY THROW AWAY YOUR MONEY and sacrifice your health, perhaps your life, by trifling with your disease in this way? THERE IS A BETTER WAY. See Fig. 5.

The RED shows where Catarrh spreads.

The BLUE shows the limits of salves, sprays, liquids and other remedies.

The Blosser Medicated Treatment reaches everywhere the disease reaches. See Figure 5.

THE RED and THE BLUE, in the accompanying cuts, will show at a glance the one great fact about the treatment of Catarrh, viz.: that IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE to reach the disease with SPRAYS, DOUCHES and LIQUIDS of various kinds—much less with "BALMS," SALVES, SNUFFS, the ordinary "INHALERS," and all similar methods of treatment.

In the cuts, Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, THE RED shows the parts that are attacked by Catarrh, and THE BLUE shows the result of the attempt to reach it by methods of treatment above mentioned.

In Fig. 5 THE BLUE shows the extent of the application of DR. BLOSSER'S CATARRH REMEDY, which alone reaches every spot that the disease may possibly attack, just as THE BLUE displaces THE RED in Fig. 5.

Dr. Blosser's Discovery

The problem of successfully treating Catarrh is the problem of applying directly to the inflamed and ulcerated membranes in the air passages a remedy that will disinfect the sores, destroy the germs, and set up a healing process.

It is the height of folly to try to heal inflammation and ulceration by medicines swallowed into the stomach, ALONE, when you can apply a healing remedy right to the disease.

It is equally foolish to try to heal a disease by a local application that does not reach half the diseased parts.

In these two things we have the explanation of the failure of the generality of Catarrh remedies and treatments.

One set of remedies is taken into the stomach, and they fail—every one of them.

Another set consists of sprays, douches, ointments, or balms, and they do not reach more than from one-tenth to one-half of the diseased parts, and whether the medicine itself has any healthy virtue or not, it cannot heal when it does not reach the disease. All remedies applied in those ways are a failure, and must be, no matter what they are composed of.

There is one more little class of applications which are, perhaps, the most useless of all. It is that class where you draw air through a little sponge or other porous substance in a tube, and get the odor—nothing more—the odor of a volatile, pungent, loud-smelling stuff, the inhalation of which impresses the nerves which give the sense of smell, but the fact is they accomplish nothing more than this. To call a remedy of that kind a medical inhalation is to practice a deception—it is not a medicine, it is only a smell.

In contrast with all these things is Dr. Blosser's Catarrh Remedy.

His treatment is unlike any other. It is not a spray, douche, salve, cream, or inhaler, but is a more direct and thorough treatment than any of these.

It consists of a warm vapor which is heavily laden with the medical extract of the remedy, and this is carried to every affected spot.

When you draw the vapor into the mouth and then let it come out through the nose, and when you "hold the nose" and blow, as in blowing the nose, the medical vapor goes everywhere, through the Eustachian tubes into the middle ears, through the little tubes into the frontal sinus where Catarrh gives you so much pain (in the forehead), into every sinus, cell and antrum, into the lungs and bronchial tubes, everywhere. It removes the stench of disease, it runs out the putrid, rotten accumulations, it reduces the inflammation, it sets the ulcerated membranes and tissues to healing. In due time it stops the annoying, catarrhal discharge, and then you are rid of the disease. If you will use the little precautions that we advise, you will never have Catarrh again.

These are the simple facts about Catarrh, and I give them as the result of 36 years' experience in the successful treatment of this disease. I leave it to the reader if what I have said is not clear and full of common sense.

Free Sample by Mail

Write a postal card, or cut out and fill in the coupon below, and we will send you by mail A LIBERAL TRIAL TREATMENT ENTIRELY FREE. If you suffer from Catarrh, Bronchitis, Asthma, Catarrhal Deafness or any other catarrhal trouble, YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO NEGLECT THE USE OF THIS GRAND REMEDY. Catarrh, if neglected, may extend to the lungs, finally leading to consumption. This remedy has cured Catarrh of every form in the nose, head, throat, middle ear and lungs. No matter who, or what remedy has failed in your case, this should cure you.

When you try the free sample and see how the warm, pleasant, medicated vapor GOES TO EVERY SPOT AND GIVES IMMEDIATE RELIEF, you will be convinced. The full treatment is not expensive. The regular package, containing enough to last one whole month, sent by mail, postpaid for $1. It is not on sale at the drug stores, as we wish our patients to get the medicine fresh from our laboratory.

Remember a postal card, addressed to Dr. J. W. Blosser, 27 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga., or the coupon, with your name and address, will bring you this FREE TRIAL TREATMENT. It will also bring you free an illustrated book.

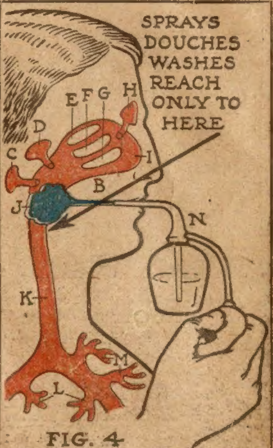

FIG. 4

Fig. 4—Shows how little of the mucous memorane is reached when the spray is directed into the mouth.

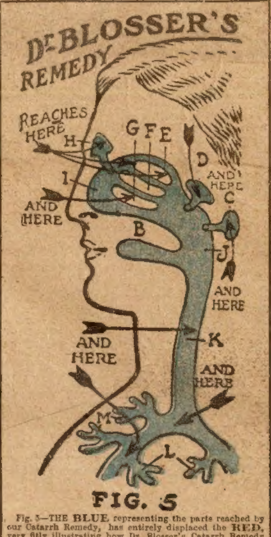

FIG. 5

Fig. 5—THE BLUE representing the parts reached by our Catarrh Remedy, has entirely displaced the RED, very fitly illustrating how Dr. Blosser's Catarrh Remedy reaches and heals every affected part. IT GOES EVERYWHERE, into every nook and corner in the throat, head and lungs. It goes to the MIDDLE EAR (C), into every sinus and cell (D and H). It gets under the turbinates (E, F and G), and into the THROAT and LUNGS (J, K, L, M); and everywhere it goes it exerts a powerful and healing influence.

☞ CUT THIS OUT, FILL IN AND MAIL AT ONCE. ☜

DR. J. W. BLOSSER,
27 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir: Please send me by mail (free of cost) your Trial Treatment for Catarrh, Deafness, Bronchitis, Asthma, Catarrh of the Middle Ear, etc. Also send your Free Illustrated Treatise on Catarrh.

Name..

Town..

Street or R. F. D.............................State....................

Spell out name with pencil very, very plainly.